

WILD WEST



WEEKLY

A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES Etc. OF WESTERN LIFE.

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YOUNG WILD WEST AND HIS DEAD SHOT BAND:

OR, THE SMUGGLERS OF THE CANADIAN BORDER.

By AN OLD SCOUT.



et the boat off, but could not do so. Just then Wild let his lasso about the neck of one of the three, the Chinaman with the sword cut the lariat in two.

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Young Wild West and His Deadshot Band;

OR,

The Smugglers of the Canadian Border.

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CHAPTER I.

YOUNG WILD WEST AND THE REVENUE MAN.

Young Wild West was standing in front of the postoffice in Weston, Dakota, one morning in early spring when the stage coach from Devil Creek, a hustling mining town some eighteen miles distant, pulled up and allowed the passengers to get out.

The handsome young Prince of the Saddle and Champion Deadshot of the West, as the boy was called, was simply one of about twenty who had gathered there to await the arrival of the mail.

Attired in a fine new hunting suit of buckskin trimmed with red silk fringe, Young Wild West surely made a perfect picture of the true young Westerner.

His long chestnut hair hung over his shoulders, making a sort of frame for a perfect face, which, though boyish-looking, possessed all the lines of strength, courage and tenacity of purpose.

He was talking to his three partners in the mining business, who consisted of Cheyenne Charlie, a well known government scout; Jim Dart, a handsome boy of his own age, and Jack Robedee, another scout, who wore a wooden leg from the effects of one of his encounters with renegades.

The four were no doubt the richest mine owners in the town of Weston, and they had made their money through pluck, luck and dogged determination.

The last passenger to alight from the stage coach this particular morning was a bronze-faced man of fifty who had more or less of a military appearance.

He scanned those standing about the postoffice with a

critical eye, and as his gaze finally rested upon Young Wild West, he stepped forward and said:

"I guess you are the gentleman I want to see. You are Young Wild West, are you not?"

"That's my name," replied Wild, who was not a little surprised at the stranger's action.

"I thought so. You see, I had a pretty good description of you before I got here. My name is Deering—David Deering, though I hardly suppose you have ever heard of me."

"I can't say that I have, Mr. Deering."

"No. Well, I came here to Weston to see you on very important business. I am very glad I met you as soon as I left the stage. Can I speak in private to you?"

"Oh, yes. Come right into the postoffice. There is a back room there that we can have the use of for a few minutes."

"Thank you."

Young Wild West led the tall man with the military appearance into the postoffice and then back into a rear room, leaving his three partners wondering what was in the wind.

A very pretty young girl, who was in the act of unlocking the mail bags as Wild and Deering passed through, smiled at the dashing young fellow as he went by her.

This was Arietta Murdock, Young Wild West's sweetheart, who was not only a beautiful girl, but a true Western girl who knew how to ride and shoot as good as a man, and whose courage was remarkable for one of her sex.

Her grandfather was the postmaster of the town, but she was generally in charge and did most of the business, she having been appointed his assistant.

But let us see what business the stranger had with her young lover.

David Deering, as he called himself, closed the door as soon as they were in the back room.

"Now, Mr. West, I will tell you what my business is in a very few words. I am a United States revenue officer, and——"

"You haven't come to arrest me, I hope," interrupted Wild, with a laugh.

"No, I have come to try and get you to help put down the smugglers that have been working so successfully on the Canadian border for a long time."

"Ah!" and the handsome young Prince of the Saddle grew interested.

The face of Deering brightened.

He saw he had impressed the boy favorably by what he had said.

"Yes," he went on, "you have been recommended as being just the party to put an end to this smuggling business, which has got to be enormous of late. The majority of the smugglers are Chinese—shrewd rascals who have lived long enough in this country to learn the ways of the evil white man and who are cruel and villainous enough to commit any crime imaginable in order to gain a point in their unlawful business. It is quite probable that many of them will have to be shot before the gang is broken up, so I have been instructed by the head of the department to ask you to organize a small band of men of courage and determination who can shoot to kill, if it is necessary."

"I see," said Wild. "You want someone to watch on this side of the border, and when they attempt to bring the goods across to catch them or prevent them?"

"Yes, that is partly what is wanted. But if you conclude to enlist your services you will be allowed to act on either side of the border. The Northwestern Mounted Police of Canada are working in conjunction with us to put a stop to the smuggling, and they will be made aware of your presence there the minute you arrive on the scene, almost."

"Well, I suppose I ought to have a little time to think it over," remarked our hero.

"Oh, yes! Take your time, but I do hope you will decide to accompany me back to the border with your band of picked men."

Wild now took off his hat and sat down.

"Tell me all about it in detail," he said.

That seemed to be just what Deering wanted to do.

He tipped back in his chair and talked away for half an hour without being interrupted once.

When he had finished Wild arose from his chair, and, putting out his hand, exclaimed:

"Shake, Mr. Deering! You can count on me to go with you and help clean out the Chinese Smugglers of the Border."

"Hurrah!" cried Deering, throwing his hat to the ceiling. "I was afraid you wouldn't go. Now, I know we'll soon stop the smuggling of silks and tea and other stuff

over the border. Young Wild West, you are a brick, and you will not lose a thing by going to the North with me. Just pick out a few of your deadshot friends as soon as you can and we will start for the Souris river."

"All right," answered our hero. "It just happened that I had nothing else on hand just now, and I guess a little skirmishing with the Chinese won't be bad exercise for us. Come over to the office of the Wild West Mining and Improvement Company with me. But wait! I want to get my mail first."

Wild was leading the way out of the back room now.

The mail had been received and distributed by this time, and as he walked up to the little window his sweetheart handed him the letters and papers that were directed to him and the company of which he was the treasurer.

There were very few in the postoffice now, and as Wild took the mail he observed:

"Et, I want to introduce you to Mr. Deering, of Juniper Falls. Mr. Deering, this is my sweetheart, Miss Murdock."

The girl put out her hand in true Western style.

Any person whom her lover thought good enough to be introduced to her she thought good enough to shake hands with.

"I think I can guess what brought Mr. Deering here," she observed, after the usual remarks following an introduction were passed.

"You think you can, eh?" and the revenue man smiled.

"Yes, you came here to take Wild away on some dangerous trip, I'll bet! It seems that he can't stay a whole week here in town. If he cannot be running into all sorts of dangers he is not happy. I wish he would settle down like some of the rest of the folks out here."

"It would be impossible for me to do that, Et," said Wild. "You know my disposition about as well as anyone does, and just think of me spending my time around the office of the company and the postoffice day after day, with only an occasional horse thief hanging or a fight between a couple of bad men taking place to keep me from going to sleep entirely—what would be the result?"

"Well, I don't know."

"I do. I'd get so lazy and fat that I'd feel like a man of sixty with the gout. No! I can't settle down yet, Et, and you know it. There is too much going on in the Wild West for me to settle down. I want to have my share of the fun and excitement and, incidentally, do all the good I can."

"That's the way to talk!" said David Deering, looking at the boy admiringly. "You are made out of the right sort of material. You are bound to win out in the end."

"Oh, he always comes out a winner," corrected Arietta. "Wild always comes out ahead in anything he undertakes, and the reason is because he never undertakes to do a thing unless he knows he is right."

"Nobly spoken, Miss Murdock. It strikes me that you do not want him to settle down as much as you try to make us believe. I am rather of the opinion that you are proud of the achievements of Young Wild West."

Arietta blushed and then they all laughed.

Wild then led the way outside, where he found his three partners waiting.

He quickly introduced them to the revenue man, and then all hands walked over to the office of the Wild West Mining and Improvement Company.

Just as they reached the building and were turning to go in the clatter of hoofs reached their ears.

Then the discordant voices of a lot of reckless men rang out loudly.

"A gang of cow punchers comin' to town, I reckon," observed Cheyenne Charlie, stroking his dark, silky beard and turning to get a good view of the approaching horsemen.

"Whoop! Whoop! Hurroo—hurroo!"

Around a bend in the mountain road came about a dozen cowboys riding at full speed and waving their shoot-ers and hats in the air in a decidedly reckless fashion.

"Hip Hooray!" yelled the leader, a big fellow in a flaming red shirt. "We're jest in from Spondulicks, an' we're goin' to make Rome howl! We beat ther cars, an' now we're goin' to turn things upside down!"

These remarks were directed at Young Wild West and his companions, for there was no one else in sight around there.

"Let yourselves go!" the boy called out. "But be careful you don't ride on anyone's corns."

"What's that?" roared the big man in the red shirt, and he reined in his horse so quickly that he was almost thrown from the saddle. "Did I hear a young jumpin'-jack talk to me, or did I not?"

The whole crowd came to a halt at this, and in less than a minute our friends were completely surrounded by them.

The men were a reckless lot, and as they had been imbibing in whisky pretty freely there was no doubt that they were out for anything in the line of what they chose to call fun.

The leader was evidently a sort of terror among his acquaintances, for they all sat still in the saddle and watched to see what he was going to do.

The fellow very deliberately began to arrange his lariat as though he was going to catch a wild steer or something of the kind.

He had his eyes fixed on Young Wild West, however, and that fact made it quite plain that he was going to try and lasso him.

And Wild, with a smile of amusement on his handsome face, stood still in his tracks waiting for him.

"Was it you that spoke, sonny?" he asked, as he got the lasso all ready to let it go.

"Yes, I guess it was me," was the calm retort. "I just thought I'd remind you that people have to behave themselves when they come to Weston."

"Oh! that's how it is, is it? Well, I reckon I'll have to rope you in an' give you a spankin'. I won't take ther

trouble to git off my horse; I'll jest yank you to me, like this!"

Whizz!

The noose of the lariat whirled through the air and would certainly have settled about the body of Wild had he not darted forward at the same instant.

And when he darted forward he made straight for the leader of the gang of cowboys.

"You need not bother about roping me to you," he said. "Here I am!"

Then he jumped up and caught the fellow by the shoulder before he knew what had struck him.

Thud!

The big cowboy landed on the ground with a jar that almost took the breath from him.

"Wha—what in blazes is ther matter?" he roared, as he staggered to his feet.

"Nothing at all, my friend," retorted Young Wild West. "But there will be something the matter pretty quick if you don't mount that cayuse and ride on about your business!"

"Er—er—what!"

"Don't you understand me?" and, catching his wrist with his left hand, Wild shut to on it and gave it a twist at the same time.

"Ow—wow!" yelled the cowboy, while his followers looked on in astonishment. "Fill him full of lead, boys! He's breakin' my arm!"

"I reckon ther ain't goin' to be any shootin' done around here without I take a hand in it," exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie, as he saw one of the horsemen make a grab for his revolver.

The scout meant what he said, too, for he had the man covered in a twinkling.

But that was not all!

His other two partners, Jim Dart and Jack Robedee, also had drawn their shooters.

And just to be in the game, David Deering whisked out a heavy Colt's six-shooter.

"This looks like business," he remarked.

By this time half a dozen men were hastening to the scene.

They came from the office of the company, and they appeared with smiling faces, for they knew that someone had been fooling with Wild and had got the tables turned on him.

The sight of the drawn weapons did not bother them a bit.

The big cowboy was now on his knees and Young Wild West still had hold of his wrist.

"Are you going to behave yourself?" the boy asked.

"Yes!" came the reply. "Let up, you feller, won't yer? I was only foolin'."

"Certainly I will. There! Now get on your horse and go on into town and have a rip-roaring good time; but be careful you don't tread on anyone's corns!"

The man made no reply.

He mounted his horse as quickly as he could and then rode off, followed by his gang.

"Well, that beats anything I ever saw!" said Deering.

CHAPTER II.

GETTING THE BAND TOGETHER.

Young Wild West had taken a strong liking to the revenue man from the start, and the more he saw of him the better he thought of him.

He was satisfied that he was a plucky man who would not swerve from his purpose, even in times of danger.

When they were all seated in the office talking and laughing over what had just taken place outside they made quite a happy company.

Old Dove-Eye Dave, the pioneer resident of the town and president of the Wild West Mining and Improvement Company, was present, and at once took kindly to Deering.

"You come for ther right one when you come to Young Wild West," he said, after he had heard what his mission to Weston was. "If Wild can't make them yaller-skinned skunks fly no one kin. Why, it won't take him ten minutes to git a band of regular deadshots together—men what never misses when they fire, an' I reckon them's ther kind that will be wanted up there on ther Canady line."

"Yes, those are the sort we want," answered the revenue man.

"Well, we've got 'em right here in Weston, then. There's Wild himself! He's never found a man what could shoot as good as he kin; an' there's Cheyenne Charlie, an' Jim Dart, an' Jack Robedee! Show me ther skunk of a livin' man what kin beat them an' I'll stand treat to a barrel of liquor. An' there's me an' Sam Murdock, too. We're sorter old, but I reckon we kin draw a bead with a rifle yet."

"Right you are, Dove-Eye," spoke up Wild. "You can be one of my Deadshot Band if you want to."

"Well, I reckon I do want to!" cried the old man, jumping to his feet.

Evidently he had not expected he would be chosen to go with them.

"And old man Murdock can go, too."

"Good enough! Putty work! I reckon us old fellers will give a good account of ourselves."

"And the others you mentioned will also go with us," went on Wild. "But we need about four more. They will probably consist of Lively Rick, Pink Slatter, Easy Edward and John Sedgwick, who made me promise to take him with us the next time we went out on a trip. Then we will take Wing Wah along to do the cooking for us and to act as an interpreter, in case we happen to take any of the Chinese smugglers prisoners."

"That's ther ticket!" cried Cheyenne Charlie. "Hooray for Young Wild West, boys!"

The cheering that followed was accompanied by the thumping of Jack Robedee's wooden leg on the floor, and the result was that there was a perfect din in the office.

Deering was much pleased at the result of his visit to Weston.

He considered that he had been very lucky in getting Young Wild West to agree to take a hand against the border smugglers, though he had never heard of the dashing young Westerner till his superior sent him to Weston to find him.

The revenue man remained around the office until noon, and then he accepted the invitation of Wild to take dinner with him and Jim Dart.

They being the only unmarried ones of the partners, they kept bachelors' hall in a neat little cottage just in the rear of the big office building.

They had a Chinaman named Wing Wah, who did the cooking and housekeeping for them, and as he was an expert and not at all lazy, the Mongolian was a great success in his line.

Deering had a chance to learn what sort of a cook he was when he sat down to dinner that day.

He was more than pleased with the many dishes the Chinaman put on the table.

"We have a little of everything to eat when we are home," Wild said. "But when we are out on the plains or in the wilderness of the mountains sometimes we don't have much of anything."

"I believe that," answered Deering. "I have experienced a little of it myself. I went moose hunting last fall with three friends up in the forests of Manitoba. Sore how we got lost, and then a snowstorm came up and it was two weeks before we found our way back to civilization again. We lived on the carcass of a bull moose for the last four days, and you can imagine that it was anything but pleasant, since our salt was gone and the meat was so tough that we could hardly chew it."

"I imagine what it must have been," answered Jim Dart, with a laugh. "Well, I must say that in all of our experiences we have never been quite as bad off as that."

After the meal was over Wild put out the cigars, and when they had smoked awhile he suggested that they take a walk around town and hunt up the parties he had decided to take with him on the trip to the Canadian border.

"There are four or five of them to see yet, you know," he observed. "One of them, Lively Rick, lives at Devil Creek, but as we are going through that way we can easily pick him up. He will leave anything to go with us, I am sure."

"Of course he will," spoke up Jim. "He'd like to go every time, but it wouldn't do to ask him, since his wife thinks he would be better off if he paid more attention to his gold mine."

"She might be right on that," observed the revenue man. "Well, perhaps she is, for the most part. But I have seen Rick make a bigger pile on a trip with us than he

could have made by staying home and working three months hard."

"That alters the case, then. He will not have much of a chance to make money on this trip, though, unless he gets in with some of the troops and wins it gambling."

"Lively Rick never set the world afire at gambling," said Wild. "He is something like Charlie—not lucky enough in that line."

"How about yourself?"

"I never play any sort of a game for money unless I have a deeper purpose in view than the mere winning of someone else's money. I sometimes play when I am trying to learn what sort of a man I am playing against is. I might say that I am quite lucky when I play, and that I understand the games played in these parts pretty well."

"You bet he understands them!" exclaimed Jim. "He could break any faro bank in the country if he made up his mind to do it."

Deering was much interested.

He made up his mind that Young Wild West was no ordinary young fellow.

He had seen enough of him when he had brought the drunken cowboy to terms so quickly that morning.

He walked along with Wild and Jim until they reached the corner at the bank.

Just as they got there they saw Cheyenne Charlie and Jack Robedee coming.

Robedee was stumping along with his wooden leg just as though he had never owned a better one.

He had become thoroughly used to it by this time.

"Hello!" he called out, as he caught sight of them. "We thought you might take a turn around town after dinner, so we set out to meet you."

"That's right!" added the scout.

"Well, come along, then," answered Wild. "Mr. Deering wants to take a look at the town, and we can see the rest of the men we want at the same time."

"I spoke to old man Murdock about it," said Charlie.

"Well, what did he say?"

"Oh, he's only too glad to go."

"I thought he would be."

"I guess they all will be," observed Dart.

The party now headed straight for the Gazoo Hotel, which was the leading hotel in Weston.

As they neared the place they heard lots of shouting and laughter coming from the bar-room.

Then they took note of the fact there were a number of horses hitched outside.

"Them cow punchers is there," said Cheyenne Charlie, a broad grin coming over his face. "They've started in to make Rome howl, as they said they would. They've forgot all about what happened up near ther office, I s'pose."

"That is just about the size of it," nodded the revenue officer. "I am glad we came along this way. I want to see how they are acting."

"That big feller in ther red shirt might take it in his head to try an' git square on Wild," spoke up Jack. "Wild,

you want to be on ther lookout. He struck me as bein' a sort of treacherous feller."

"I guess he won't bother me any," was the reply.

The five soon reached the hotel.

There was no one on the stoop, but the bar-room appeared to be pretty well filled.

Young Wild West led the way inside, being compelled to push his way through the crowd, which was thickest at the door.

Jack came next with his wooden leg, and as he passed through the door he accidentally stumped upon a cowboy's foot.

"Git out, you wooden-legged mackerel!" yelled the cowboy. "I'll flop your head off your shoulders fur bein' so clumsy!"

Then he hit Robedee a blow in the back of his neck which sent him headlong into the center of the room, his head striking another cowboy full in the pit of the stomach.

Then a general row started.

Half a dozen went for poor Jack.

But none of them hit him, though.

Young Wild West cut loose among them, and in less than a minute he had them staggering back in every direction.

"You want to pile it onto a cripple, do you?" he shouted. "Well, I guess not! Just behave yourselves, now!"

"Gee-whizz! Boys, it is ther youngster what give Kansas Neal ther squeeze an' dip this mornin'!" yelled one of the cowboys. "Look out! I reckon lead's goin' to fly right away!"

He whipped out his shooter as he spoke and was in the act of leveling it at Young Wild West when the boy fired and shot him through the wrist.

Down to the floor went the revolver, while the cowboy began dancing about howling with pain.

"The next man who pulls a gun will go down to rise no more!" cried the young Prince of the Saddle, in a ringing tone.

Instantly a deep hush came over the crowd in the bar-room.

The tone of voice of the boy implied even more than his words.

The cowboys, who were showing how "bad" they could be when they got started, were awed to a man.

Wild now stood in the center of the room, a revolver in either hand.

But neither of them pointed at anything but the floor.

"Gentlemen," he remarked in his cool, easy-going way, "which of you is Kansas Neal?"

"I am," said the big fellow with the red shirt, whom Wild had forced to his knees when the gang rode into town and tried to have some fun with him and his companions.

"Oh! You are Kansas Neal, eh?"

"Yes, that's ther handle I go by."

"You forgot what I told you this morning, I guess, didn't you?"

"I reckon I must have, young feller," was the reply, in a rather sheepish voice.

"I told you to behave yourselves while you were here in Weston, didn't I?"

"You said somethin' like that."

"Well, when I say anything like that I never say it for fun—I always mean it."

"Yes, sir!" answered the big cowboy, meekly.

At this Deering broke into a laugh.

It struck him as being very comical to see a mere boy boss a big gang of rough appearing men, and he could not withhold the laugh that forced itself upon him.

This nettled the big fellow somewhat.

"My friend," said he, turning to the revenue officer, "I reckon I knows when ther drop's on me. If you was in my place I'm dead sartin that you wouldn't do a thing different from what I'm doin'."

"I'll admit that," said Deering, promptly. "Excuse me for laughing at you."

"Are you fellows going to behave yourselves?" asked Wild, not noticing what was being said at all.

"Yes!" came the unanimous response from the cowboys.

"All right, then. Get in and enjoy yourselves; but don't tread on anyone's corns."

"It was ther wooden-legged feller what done ther treadin'," observed one of them, as he went out of the door and made for his horse.

Wild and his friends laughed at this and some of the cowboys joined them.

It was a fact, and that made the speech appear rather comical.

One by one they went out of the bar-room.

Kansas Neal was the last to go, and as he got to the door he turned and said:

"Young feller, kin I ask who you are?"

"Certainly. My name is Young Wild West."

"Thanks! I'll meet yer ag'in some time," and out he went.

CHAPTER III.

SOME EXCITEMENT AT JUNIPER FALLS.

The little town of Juniper Falls was situated on the left bank of the Souris river that divided the United States from the British possessions.

It was, because there is a much larger town there now under a different name.

At the time of which we write white people were pretty scarce in that region.

Of course there were many hunters who plied their business there, and right near the border there was always to be found a detachment of soldiers, together with revenue men, to guard the tariff laws laid down by Uncle Sam.

Juniper Falls was not much of a place, and it derived its name from a little fall to the river just there and that a man named Juniper had been the first hunter to erect a log cabin on the site.

The government had erected a big log building that was so long that it looked like a monster bowling alley from the outside, but which was quite comfortably arranged into rooms on the inside for the accommodation of the officers and soldiers and the revenue men.

This was the headquarters for the division that had to look after a hundred miles of the border, and it is needless to say that at certain times the men were kept pretty busy.

On the other side of the line were what were called the Northwestern Mounted Police.

While they were not there exclusively for the purpose of preventing the smuggling of goods over to American soil, they always tried to suppress it when it came under their notice.

These mounted police were stationed there to look after Canadian interests in general, and it was not safe for any but a British subject to hunt, fish or mine on the north side of the border.

The smugglers who were so persistently and successfully at work there were mostly Chinese, though it was plainly evident that they were but the tools of some white men who laid out the work for them.

The majority of these Chinese had been in California long enough to talk "pigeon-English," but some of them came over from China direct with the ships that carried the silks, teas and other articles that were grown and manufactured in China, which were landed on British soil and then carted overland to the least protected places on the border.

In this way many Chinese got into the United States who might otherwise have been excluded for various reasons.

The border line of Washington, Idaho and a portion of Montana was so well guarded by American revenue men that the smugglers were forced to come further east to enable them to have anything like plain sailing.

And it so happened at the time of which we write that the Dakota line was where they were working so successfully.

One fine morning about a week after Young Wild West had agreed to accompany Deering, the revenue man, to the Canadian border with his deadshot band, there was considerable excitement in the settlement of Juniper Falls.

A short, stocky man, wearing leather breeches and a coat of the same material, was being dragged along by two of the bluecoats doing guard duty at the headquarters.

"Lemme go, hi say!" he cried, trying his best to get away from them. "Hi ain't done nothing wrong, hindeed Hi ain't. Hit wasn't whisky Hi 'ad hin ther bottles; hit was nothink but bloomin' spring water a little bit colored with prunes. Let me go; Hi'll give you a two-dollar bill apiece."

Now it so happened that the two guards were grossly intoxicated.

They only laughed at the protestations of the man, who was a regular Cockney straight from London, England.

As they were pulling him along past a good-sized shanty two men attired in the garb of hunters came out.

"Let up on him, you fellers," said one of them. "You fellers drank up ther most of ther whisky he had, an' now you are goin' to place him under arrest for selling it. I'll bet you didn't pay him a cent for what you drank, either!"

The words were scarcely out of the mouth of the man before one of the drunken guards drew his heavy Colt's revolver and fired at him point blank.

Luckily the bullet merely grazed his head, and as the hunter staggered back his companion fired at the soldier, who was certainly going far beyond his limit.

He was just going to shoot the bluecoat dead in his tracks, when a number of horsemen came galloping up the single street of the settlement.

The appearance of a crowd of strangers naturally diverted the attention of all hands for a second, and by the time the belligerents were ready to resume hostilities the horsemen were on the scene.

"'Ello, there!" shouted the Cockney. "Give us a 'and, won't you? These bloomin' duffers 'ave got drunk on my spring water and prune juice, 'hand now they are goin' to place me hin ther guard'ouse. 'Elp me, won't you? Hif you do H'll never come across the river again!"

Just then the soldier fired another shot, again narrowly missing the hunter.

There would probably have been two dead soldiers in no time then if a ringing voice had not exclaimed:

"Stop the shooting! If you don't I'll take a hand in the game!"

Young Wild West and his band of deadshots had arrived at Juniper Falls.

And just in time to prevent a serious clash between the government men at the log house and the hunters and trappers who resided at the settlement.

The two guards looked at the dashing young fellow in a bewildered way, letting go of the Englishman mechanically.

"'Ooray! Hi'm at liberty once more! Let me git on British soil again and Hi'll sing 'God Save the Queen' with hall me 'eart!" cried the fellow, as he started to run from the spot.

"Hold on!" called out Young Wild West. "Tell me who you are and what the trouble is before you go."

"You want to know who Hi are? Why, Hi'm 'Arry Hatwood, hat your service."

"Oh!" and a smile played about the lips of the handsome young deadshot.

The Cockney was very pompous in his manner now, and no one to see him just then would have thought he was a very meek prisoner in the hands of a pair of drunken soldiers a minute before.

"So your name is 'Arry Hatwood, eh?" resumed Wild.

"Yes, sir, that's me name."

"Are you sure of it?"

"Why, you bloomin' young chap, sure Hi am."

"Just write it down for me, will you?"

"What for?"

"Just to gratify my curiosity. Write it down!"

The last was said in a commanding tone of voice.

The two soldiers had been looking about for an avenue of escape, but when they heard the command they remained stock still in their tracks.

And the two men who had emerged from the shanty looked on, puzzled and expectant.

The Englishman quickly produced a pencil and piece of paper and quickly wrote his name upon it.

Then he stepped up and handed it to Young Wild West.

The way it read was, "Harry Atwood."

Wild handed it to his chum, Jim Dart, who smiled and passed it to Cheyenne Charlie, who in turn passed it around among the men.

Wing Wah, the Chinese cook, was the last to get hold of the paper, and he simply smiled.

"So be, velly good!" he exclaimed, handing it back.

Wing Wah couldn't read, but he seemed to enjoy it all just the same.

"That's one blamed sort of a way to pronounce a name, I think," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie. "He says it just backwards."

"That's right," nodded Wild. "But he can't help it, as that is the way the people talk where he came from. Don't make fun of Harry Atwood, boys. I didn't make him write his name just for the purpose of making a laughing-stock of him. I did it just because it happened to strike me that way. You will see by this that you can't always judge a man even by his name. Whether his name is 'Arry Hatwood or Atwood Harry, it seems that he was being treated rather mean by those drunken fellows, who are a disgrace to the uniforms they wear. Just let them go and report to their superior. That will be the best way to punish them."

The last was said to the two hunters.

"All right," said the one who had been twice shot at. "I suppose that is ther best way to settle it. But ther next time a drunken soldier attempts to blow a hole through my head I'm goin' to drop him, that's all."

"You are, eh?" cried the soldier, and then he quickly fired again.

But he was a very poor shot and he missed, as before.

Then, before he could pull the trigger again, the hunter raised his revolver and poured three shots into him, dropping him and killing him almost instantly.

"That's all right," nodded Young Wild West. "There will be some trouble over this, but I will see you through, my friend. You did just right."

With that Young Wild West turned toward the log house, which was not far distant.

His deadshot band followed him.

They had scarcely reached the headquarters when Deering came galloping up.

He had accompanied them all the way from Weston, but had stopped to consult with an officer of the Canadian police.

That was why he had not been with the band when they rode into town.

Colonel Denny was the officer who was in charge of the government affairs at that post, and when the band of horsemen that had such a dashing appearance came to a halt in front of his quarters he was standing in the open door to meet them.

Young Wild West saluted in true military style and then sat still in the saddle, waiting for Deering to get there.

But the colonel was not going to wait for an introduction.

"You are Young Wild West, I presume," he said, stepping out of the door.

"Yes, sir, I am Young Wild West and this is my band of deadshots," was the quick reply, as the boy swept his hand around and indicated his companions.

"I am very glad you have given your services to us for awhile. I am Colonel Denny, the officer in charge here. You will dismount at your convenience and I will see to it that you shall be shown to the quarters you will occupy while here on the border."

"Thank you, colonel!" and with that he slid gracefully from the saddle.

Then every man in his party did likewise, except Wing Wah, who, being unable to get off gracefully, fell off and landed on his back.

This caused a universal grin, but it was nothing new, for all that.

The Chinaman would never become an accomplished rider, no matter if he took a lesson every three hours as long as he lived, and he had made lots of fun for the men on the journey from Weston.

It was at this juncture that Deering made his appearance.

He had dismounted, and he now stepped forward and introduced each one of the band separately to the colonel.

The Chinaman was the last, of course.

"Can he shoot straight?" asked the colonel, looking at Wild smilingly.

"No, but he can cook," was the reply.

"I see. You like good things. Well, I will admit that a Chinaman can fix up no end of things that taste fine. But last winter, when we had a Chinese cook here, I found the tail of a mouse in my soup, and I made up my mind that I wanted no more Chinese cooking."

"Didn't you give the cook a chance to explain how the tail of the mouse came to be in the soup?" asked Jim Dart.

"Oh, yes! He explained it, too. He said he must have forgotten to cut the tail off one of the mice he used in making the soup."

"Oh!"

Everybody had a laugh then, but Wing Wah, who had been paying strict attention to the story.

"Me no usee mousee in cookee," he spoke up, as soon as he could make himself heard. "Me cookee alle samee Melican lady."

"That's right, Wing!" exclaimed Wild. "You are right. If you didn't I would shoot your pig-tail off your head in no time! You are a good cook, and you don't believe in eating rats and mice like some Chinese do."

"No; me allee samee Melican man."

There was a little more good-natured talk, and then Young Wild West and his band of deadshots were shown to their quarters.

CHAPTER IV.

WILD DISCOVERS SOME SMUGGLING.

The colonel and Deering accompanied Young Wild West to the quarters they were to occupy, and as they walked along our hero related the story of the shooting affair that took place at the other end of the settlement.

"All right," said the colonel, when Wild had told him that the hunter was justified in shooting the soldier. "I will investigate the affair and have you called as a witness. Your testimony will decide the case. The other guard shall be punished for the part he played in the affair. That Englishman who wears a suit of leather is a crafty fellow. He brings whisky to the settlement from the other side and disposes of it at a fair profit. If it were not that the majority of the men seem to be inclined to get drunk on the stuff, I shouldn't mind it so much."

"It is smuggling when he brings whisky over here, though," remarked Wild, looking at the officer in surprise.

"Oh, yes! It is smuggling all right enough. I am satisfied that this Harry Atwood brings the whisky over here, and so are a lot of others. But he cannot be caught at it. There is the rub."

"Cannot be caught at it!" echoed Wild.

"No. All sorts of traps have been laid for him, and it has been impossible to implicate him in anything else than the selling of whisky here."

"Perhaps he does not bring it from the Canadian side at all. It might be that there is a still somewhere on this side of the line."

"Impossible!" and the colonel threw out his chest as much as to say: "What! a secret still around here, and me here? Never!"

"Has the Englishman ever been arrested and put under a cross-fire of questioning?"

"Oh, yes; several times. We can't get anything out of him any more than that he brings pure spring water, colored with prune juice, across the river. Why! Once he was caught with a number of demijohns in his boat, and we thought we had him sure; but when the contents of

the demijohns was tasted it proved to be just what he said it was—spring water colored with prune juice. You see,” and the colonel lowered his voice, “the boys must have their whisky, and we have no other way of getting it around here outside of the regular stores that are supplied by the government.”

“I see,” said Wild.

He did see, too, for he came to the conclusion instantly that Colonel Denny liked his whisky about as much as any of his men did.

“It isn’t any of my business how much whisky this comical Cockney smuggles over here,” he thought. “I was brought here to help put down the Chinese smugglers. But——” and he shook his head, “it seems to me that there might be a whole lot interested in this smuggling business, and if there is they have got to suffer just the same as those who do the main part of the work. I came here to do business in the right way, not as a mere bluffer.”

Wild called Cheyenne Charlie, Jim Dart and Jack Robedee aside a little later and told them what the colonel had said to him.

“I don’t take a great deal of stock in him, anyway,” averred Dart. “He strikes me as being of a great deal less importance than he thinks he is. He don’t notice any of us; he just tries to keep on the right side of you. I have an idea that he is up to some game.”

“Well, if he is, and tries to work any funny business he will wish he had never seen me,” said Wild.

“Jest take it easy for awhile an’ it will figure out itself,” observed Charlie.

“That’s right,” spoke up Robedee.

“Well, you fellows need not say anything about this. Just keep your eyes and ears open, and if either of you learn anything about the whisky smuggling business just let me know. When I come to think of it we were brought here to help put down smuggling. It makes no difference whether it is done by the Chinese, the Canadians or the Americans on this side of the boundary line. I guess we will work on that plan, though we will, of course, do as we are instructed to do by Deering, who has been appointed to act as a sort of adviser to me.”

“Deering is all right, I think,” said Jim.

“Oh, yes! I am certain of that.”

“Do you think he suspects anything wrong with the people on this side in regard to the whisky smuggling business?”

“I am of the opinion that he does, but that he does not wish to become a party to any expose on account of making bad friends with certain ones. He does not drink whisky, you know.”

“And the colonel does?”

“Lots of it. The looks of him is enough to tell you that.”

“Yes, that’s so. I wonder when we are to be called out first?”

“Probably this afternoon.”

“Well, I hope so. I have an idea that it would be pretty dull work to hang around here very long.”

“So do I.”

Wild was not going to depend altogether on the rations supplied them by the government.

There was plenty of game—and big game, too—to be had around that section, and he meant that his deadshot band should live on the fat of the land.

They had shot two buffaloes from a small herd they had started that morning, and the meat selected from the carcasses had been brought along to the headquarters.

This, in addition to the partridges and other small game they had accumulated in the past two days, would feed them for a few meals, anyhow.

Jim Dart had also brought plenty of good coffee along, as he was very fond of that beverage, and was of the opinion that they would not get the best at the barracks.

When their rations were handed over to them Wing Wah took charge of them and then set at work to get dinner ready.

It was about one o’clock when they sat down to about the best meal that had ever been served in Juniper Falls.

And when it was finished they all declared themselves ready to go for the smugglers.

A little later Deering came to Wild and told him if he could get ready to start within an hour they would take a ride up the river a few miles.

Of course our hero was only too glad of the opportunity, and he at once ordered his men to get their horses ready.

But when they were all ready Deering came back and said he guessed it would be better for him and Wild to go out and look around alone.

This was a disappointment to them, but they made no complaint when their dashing young leader told them to be ready in case they were sent for.

A little after two Wild and the revenue man mounted their horses and rode away up the river.

“We will ride up here about five miles, where the river leaves the American side altogether and flows on Canadian soil. I am of the opinion that we will find a camp of Chinese up there,” said Deering.

“Good!” answered Wild. “I would like to run into the camp and see what it looks like.”

Whether the revenue man had received an inkling of the fact or whether he had merely guessed it, Wild did not know; but at any rate when they had covered about five miles they came in sight of a camp on the opposite side of the river.

A number of boats were drawn up to the bank, and as the two rode leisurely along they could see that they were pretty well loaded with boxes and bales.

“There they are!” exclaimed Deering. “I thought so. They will run that stuff over to-night and get it hauled down to the Missouri river and put on a flatboat inside of two days, if they are not prevented.”

“Is that the way they dispose of the stuff?”

“Sometimes, but more generally they have men on this

side to take charge of the goods and pay them their money. The stuff is scattered about and goes off in different directions, the most of it to the nearest railroad."

Wild took a good look at the camp.

As far as he could see there was not a white man in it. But there were lots of bundles and bales there.

The value of the contents of these might run up to thousands, and the amount of import duty the government would be cheated out of would be an enormous sum.

Wild and the revenue man rode on past the point where the Chinamen were camped on the opposite shore.

They had not proceeded more than a mile, though, when they saw a boat push off from the camp.

Two Chinamen were in it, and that they were used to handling oars was quite evident, for they rowed like veterans.

"Suppose we ride back and interview those fellows?" said our hero. "We might learn something when they land here."

"It is not likely we will be able to learn a thing, but if you wish it we will go back," was the reply. "Of course they would not think of bringing any goods a duty is on over in the daylight. Anyhow, this is British soil we are on, and if they had ever so much we could not touch them."

"Not till they crossed the boundary line back here."

"Oh! of course we would have a right to examine everything they have got in that case. I am an officer of the secret service, and you have been deputized the same, only you really have more power than I have. You are authorized to shoot to kill in case you are resisted by the smugglers on American soil."

"Well, I hope there won't be any cause to shoot to kill," answered Wild, with a smile. "But I must say that I want to see a little excitement before I go back to the Black Hills. It is a good long journey up here to the Canadian border, and if there isn't a few scrimmages to give my band of deadshots some exercise they will all be growing stale and longing to get somewhere else where they will be able to chase a horse thief or tame a bad man or two."

They now turned and rode leisurely toward the point the boat was heading for.

The Chinamen must certainly have seen them coming, but they did not appear to be the least disturbed and kept right on rowing.

Wild and Deering came to a halt on the river bank just as they landed.

One of the Celestials, who appeared to be rather fat and ungainly, got out of the boat and started as though he was going to walk to the settlement.

The other remained in the boat in silence for a few seconds and then, pushing off the boat, started back for the other side.

"Hello, John!" said Wild, as he rode alongside the walking Chinaman. "How do you feel to-day?"

"Pullee good, allee samee," was the quick reply.

"You act as though you are tired."

"Me no tired."

"Oh, you are not tired, then?"

"No, me allee samee Melican man; me no tired."

As our hero sized him up it occurred to him that the almond-eyed fellow had altogether too much clothing on for the weather.

He began to suspect that he was smuggling something that he had wrapped around his body.

But he said nothing to Deering just then.

"I'll let him go on till he gets over the line, and then I'll pounce on him," he thought.

The Chinaman continued on his way and Wild and the revenue man rode on, following the course of the river.

The minute our hero reckoned that he had got over the line he turned his horse and said to his companion:

"Come on! I guess we had better see what that fellow has with him."

"Has with him!" echoed Deering. "Why, he has nothing, beyond something he might have in his pockets."

"You don't know about that. Come on! Leave it to me to deal with him. Unless I am much mistaken he has some smuggled goods with him."

Deering appeared to be surprised.

"All right," he answered. "You can boss things; I'll do just as you say."

The Chinaman had disappeared in a grove of hackmatack trees by this time, so it was easy to approach him without being seen by him.

The two rode swiftly for the grove, and, reaching the edge of it, Wild halted and dismounted.

Deering followed suit, wondering what it all meant.

Motioning him to come on, Wild hurried noiselessly through the growth of trees.

He knew the Chinaman could not be very far distant, but he came upon him before he expected to.

In a little open space in the center of a dense thicket the Mongolian was disclosed in the act of taking off his clothing.

Young Wild West nudged Deering as the revenue man looked upon the sight with wide-open eyes.

When the loose-fitting outer garments were off the Chinaman began unwinding something from about his body.

It was silk, and of the finest quality.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST ARREST IS MADE BY WILD.

"What did I tell you?" said Wild, in a whisper to the revenue man.

"I would not have thought it," was the reply, while Deering watched the Chinaman in amazement. "That silk must be worth a lot of money. Just see how careful he is in rolling it up. He seems to be an expert at it. I'll bet that a person could never tell that it had been unwound

from the original roll. There's yards upon yards in it, too."

"That's right. Well, just wait till he gets through and then we will attend to his case. We are on our own side of the border, are we not?"

"Oh, yes."

The almond-eyed smuggler continued to unwind the silk from about his body, forming it into a perfectly smooth roll as he did so. He had just completed his task and had a roll of perhaps forty yards of the silk, when the sounds made by an approaching wagon came to the ears of our two friends.

"Ah!" exclaimed our hero. "He came here for the purpose of meeting someone. I guess we will be able to haul someone else besides the Chinaman."

"So it would seem," nodded Deering.

They waited with no little interest, and presently they heard a voice call out:

"Whoa!"

Then the Chinaman gave a satisfied nod and stepped through a break in the thicket with the roll of silk.

He had no sooner disappeared from view when Wild crept forward to the spot where his clothing lay on the ground and quickly gathered the articles up.

Then he stepped back softly to his old place.

Deering smiled at this move.

"You are going to play a joke before you get down to solid business, I see," he observed.

"Oh, it won't do any harm to have a little fun with the Chinaman," was the reply. "He will be very much mystified when he comes back and finds his clothes missing. He will probably call the other fellow to help him look for them, and just as they get pretty well puzzled we will step out and make prisoners of them."

They had not long to wait.

The next minute the Mongolian appeared through the bushes.

He looked around in a surprised way when he could see nothing of his clothes.

"Hello!" he exclaimed in his shrill, piping voice. "Chinaman's clothes gone!"

"What's that?" came from the other side of the narrow strip of bushes.

Then a man appeared before the gaze of Wild and Deering.

The latter gave a start of surprise.

"That fellow," he said. "He is employed at the barracks by Colonel Denny."

"Is that so?"

"Yes. He drives the wagon out to fetch in the game the men shoot."

"I see. He is interested in smuggling silks, too, it seems. Well, I guess we had better make ourselves known. Come on!"

The next instant they stepped through the bushes before the teamster and the Chinaman.

"Thunderation!" ejaculated the teamster.

"Blazee!" cried the Chinaman.

"Neither! You are both wrong!" exclaimed Young Wild West. "Just kindly hold up your hands, for you are both under arrest."

He had drawn his revolver and held it as though he meant to shoot in case they did not obey him.

The white man held up his hands at once, but the Mongolian looked around as though for an avenue of escape.

"If you start to run I will send a bullet through your yellow hide so quick that you won't know what struck you!" said Wild, stepping forward and thrusting the revolver under his nose.

"Me goodee Chinaman," and up went his hands.

"Yes, you are a very good one, I guess. You are a pretty sharp one, anyhow. Deering, just tie their hands, please. The Chinaman has no weapons that I see, but you had better make an examination of him. They are queer fellows, you know, and no one knows just where they have pockets."

"He can't have very many pockets as he is now," retorted the revenue man, with a grin. "The clothes he has on wouldn't amount to much if they were rolled up in a bundle."

"That is a fact. He doesn't look near as big as he did when he got out of the boat, does he? That roll of silk made a big difference in him, I must say."

Deering soon had the hands of the two tied.

"Ricketts, I am surprised at you," he said to the man.

"I s'pose you are," was the retort. "Well, I ain't got nothin' to say."

"Perhaps you will have when you get before Colonel Denny."

"Maybe I will."

The last was said in what Wild considered to be a significant tone of voice.

But he made no remark concerning it just then.

"Put them in the wagon, Deering," he said. "I will go and get the horses."

The revenue man promptly ordered the two to move.

He held a shooter pointed at them, and that made them get into the wagon willingly enough.

Wild soon brought the horses around and found Deering sitting on the front of the top wagon which was used to carry the game the soldiers shot when they went out on a hunt.

A team of mules was hitched to it and Deering at once touched them up with the whip when our hero told him to go ahead.

He then mounted the sorrel horse and led that of his companion along behind the wagon.

In this way they rode into the settlement half an hour later.

Right up to the headquarters of Colonel Denny they went, and when the mules were halted in front of the door the colonel came out posthaste.

He seemed to be excited over something, a fact that Wild did not fail to notice.

"What is the trouble?" he demanded, as soon as he could recover himself. "What have we here, anyhow?"

"Two prisoners, colonel," replied Wild. "We caught them red-handed. Deering, just make them get out, and hurry them a little."

The teamster, looking very much alarmed, promptly got out of the wagon, followed a moment later by the Chinaman.

The colonel turned several shades of color in less than a second.

"Wha—what have they got you tied for, Ricketts?" he at length found words to say.

But Ricketts only shook his head.

"I will tell you what his hands are tied for, Colonel Denny," Young Wild West spoke up in his ready way. "He received smuggled goods from this Chinaman. We saw the Chinaman come across the border and we followed him. He unwound forty or fifty yards of the finest silk from his body and gave it to Ricketts, as you call him. Deering and I lost no time in placing the pair of them under arrest."

"Quite right, quite right. But it seems to me that there must be some mistake about this. Deering, you had better report to Keasby, who is the head of your department here."

"All right," answered the revenue man, saluting, and then the colonel turned away, not giving Wild a chance to salute, if he had desired to do so.

Keasby was soon found, and when the silk was handed over to him he was much surprised, not to say delighted.

But when Deering related how Young Wild West had been the sole means of making the discovery the head of the revenue department in that section grasped our hero by the hand.

"I guess we did not make a mistake in sending for you and your deadshot band," he said. "I fancy that things will be straightened out here in a short time."

"I hope so," answered the dashing young deadshot. "I also hope that there will be no scandal attached to it."

"Scandal?" and Keasby looked at him suggestively.

"We will talk about it later on. I guess that would be better."

"Just as you say, Young Wild West."

The two prisoners were placed in the guardhouse and Keasby took the silk and placed it in the improvised custom-house that was attached to the headquarters.

Then Wild went over to where his friends were gathered.

When he told them of the little adventure of the afternoon they were all surprised, but as he did not mention how the colonel had acted in the matter, they thought it was simply a case of Ricketts trying to make a few dollars at the expense of the government.

Deering came along a few minutes later.

"We are to go out to-night and watch the Chinamen we saw in the camp," he said. "Keasby has advised it, and he says for you to use your own judgment if it comes to a

fight. The Chinamen engaged in this business are a pretty tough lot, and they are not afraid of guns or knives. They are composed of about the most villainous and reckless lot, and they seem to think it is a sort of an outrage for anyone to try and stop them from fetching over the smuggled goods. I'll wager that the life of one of us would not be worth the snap of a finger if they once had a chance."

"Well, if they are such a dangerous lot of rascals we will soon take some of their badness out of them," answered our hero. "If they persist in landing goods on this side of the river to-night they will find that they have made a big mistake. But, Deering, there is one thing that puzzles me. How is it that the soldiers don't make any arrests?"

The revenue man shrugged his shoulders.

"They never see any smuggling being done, it seems," he answered.

"Oh! I see."

"And the mounted police on the other side of the river very seldom see a strange Chinaman around here."

"They are blind when they want to be, I suppose."

"Yes, but don't say anything. I have learned more to-day than I ever suspected before. Just take things easy and be on the lookout for danger from all sources, and we will straighten things up on the Canadian border. You came here to do it, and I am going to help you till it is done."

CHAPTER VI.

WING WAH'S SPREE.

Wing Wah, the cook, had heard a whole lot of what had taken place since the arrival of the deadshot band at Juniper Falls.

He had heard how the Englishman had been bringing whisky to the place and selling it to those who had the money to buy.

Now, Wing Wah was not a drunkard by any means.

But it had been over a week since he had tasted anything strong, and the more he thought about whisky the more he felt that he wanted some.

During his sojourn at Weston the Chinaman had learned considerable of the ways of the white man.

He had learned to drink bad liquor and plaw draw poker.

He never did much of it when Young Wild West was in town, though.

But as our hero was away on various trips about the West more than half his time, it will be seen that the Celestial had a pretty good chance to do as he pleased.

One thing about him, he always attended to business when his young boss was home.

Wing Wah was listening pretty well to what was going on, and when he learned that the whole band was going away some little time after dark that night, he resolved to have a good time while they were gone.

That is, if he could strike 'Arry Hatwood.

But Wing was not worrying over his not finding him.

He felt that the fellow would surely be around somewhere.

He went along in the even tenor of his way, apparently not paying attention to anything else than his duties about the quarters.

He got up a rousing good supper for the boys and received several compliments for it.

All these he took graciously.

Wing was a good cook, and he knew it.

It was about eight o'clock when Young Wild West and his men mounted and rode off, accompanied by Deering.

The Chinaman watched them disappear, and then he began executing a few steps he had learned from a negro.

"Me bully bloy now!" he exclaimed. "Me go outee and have some flun; me gittee whisky, allee samee Melican man."

He whisked about in his preparations to leave, putting on a clean gown and giving his pig-tail an extra twist.

Then he stowed two empty flasks, a six-shooter and a pack of playing cards in his capacious pockets which, by the way, could never be seen.

Wing had plenty of money, so when he sallied forth into the only street that the town boasted of he was all fixed for some sport.

Chance led the Chinaman in the direction of the hut occupied by the two hunters who had shot the soldier that morning.

There was a bright light in the place and the sounds of revelry could be heard from within.

Now Wing was perfectly aware that whisky makes loud talk and singing.

When he heard the sounds he at once concluded that these inside the shanty had been drinking whisky.

He concluded to run the risk of knocking at the door and asking whoever might answer to direct him to where he could get some whisky.

So he boldly stepped up and knocked.

"Who's thar?" came a voice from within.

"Me, allee samee Young Wild West's cook," answered Wing.

"'Anged if hit ain't a bloomink Chinaman!" exclaimed somebody, who Wing instantly recognized as being the very man he was looking for.

The door was promptly opened by one of the hunters.

"So you're young Wild West's Chineese, are you?" he questioned.

"Yes, me Wing Wah, so be."

"Well, what do you want?"

"Some whisky, alle samee Melican man."

"Oh! you do, does yer? Step right inside. I reckon you're all right."

Wing did not hesitate to go in.

He had such faith in his young boss that he knew no one would dare to hurt him without getting punished severely for it.

When he got inside the shanty he saw the Cockney and the other hunter at the table, which was in the center of the room, playing cards.

A smile that was child-like and bland came over the Chinaman's face when he saw that there was money stacked up in various piles on the table.

"Bully bloy!" he exclaimed. "Me play pokee, allee samee Melican man."

Then the three inmates of the shanty looked at each other and grinned.

"Say! you're a bloomink young duck, that's what you are," said 'Arry Hatwood, rising and putting out his hand. "Blow me heyes if Hi ain't glad to see you!"

"Me, too, allee samee," grinned Wing.

Then he took a seat near the table.

"He wants to buy some whisky, Harry," remarked the man who had opened the door. "I guess it's all right. He's one of ther deadshot band what's come here to put down smugglin'."

"Me cookee for Young Wild West's dleadshot bland," corrected Wing, turning to the speaker.

"Good enough!"

"'Ave you got any money?" queried the Cockney.

"Pully good!" answered the Chinaman, flashing a five-dollar goldpiece in his hand so quickly that none of them saw where it came from.

"Hi fancy you are hall right," and, going to the corner, the whisky peddler lifted a board and fished out a big jug.

Wing Wah got out his two flasks in double-quick time.

"How muchee?" he questioned, holding them up.

"Two dollars, bein' hit's you."

"Allee right."

Wing touched the folds of his gown in some manner and then held out his hand with a two-dollar bill in it.

It was a quick change, and the two hunters looked at him in amazement.

Neither of them could understand how he had disposed of the goldpiece so quickly and produced the bill in its stead.

The Cockney, however, did not seem to be much puzzled about it.

He simply got hold of the bill, and then he very quickly filled the bottles, which just filled the bill, as far as Wing Wah was concerned.

Wing very coolly took a pull at one of the flasks and then handed it to the man who had retained his seat at the table.

He good-naturedly took a drink and then it was passed to the other hunter.

The Cockney did not object when he was offered it, and when he handed it back to the Chinaman there was scarcely a drop in it.

But Wing had made a favorable impression on the men, and that was all that he was looking for.

He moved his chair up to the table and took a look at the hand the Cockney had laid down in order to wait on him.

"Do you want to take a hand at poker?" asked the man at the table.

"Yes, me takee handee. What namee? Me likee gittee 'quainted flirst."

"Oh! you want to know ther fellers you play poker with, does yer? Well, I reckon that's fair enough. My name is Bill Palmer an' this is my pard, Jack Spots. Ther other is Harry Atwood, who lives over on ther other side of the river in a place called Plunket."

Wing Wah got up and bowed to first one and then the other.

He was very polite, the men thought.

The fellow called Bill got out a whisky bottle and they had another drink all around.

Then Jake and the Englishman took seats at the table.

"We'll start in anew an' throw down ther cards we held when we was disturbed in ther deck," said Bill.

"Hall right," nodded 'Arry.

Jake did not object, so the cards were shuffled and they cut for deal.

Wing Wah had learned considerable about the game, and it must be said that he knew something about cheating, too.

He did not propose to lose anything while he was out that night; he simply wanted to have a night off and enjoy himself without it costing him anything.

He affected to be very simple and ignorant about the points of the game, and the three men, who thought they were experts, imagined they were going to have an easy time of it.

The game began with a rather small ante and Wing Wah got very much interested.

"I likee play pokee, allee samee Melican man," he kept telling them, and whenever he would win a pot he would smile in his child-like way.

But pretty soon Bill and Jake began to do the most of the winning.

They were playing a sort of partner game and meant to divide what they won when the game was over.

It had been their intention to fleece the Englishman, but since the Chinaman had dropped in it made no difference who lost their money.

'Arry Hatwood was pretty good at the tricks of the game, too.

He knew he had struck a pretty hard game when he agreed to play with the two hunters, but he relied on his cheating propensities to make him get the best of them.

And when the innocent Chinaman fell into the game so readily he saw nothing but a big bunch of money coming his way.

They kept on playing for an hour, drinking every now and then.

Wing Wah was certainly taking too much whisky, but he was not losing his natural cunning or any of the points he had learned in Weston about the game.

He never once thought of what Young Wild West would say to him when he found out he had been out on a spree.

The cards had their hold upon him now and the whisky went good with them.

There was not a thought of the future in the Chinaman's head.

His mania for gambling and whisky had got the best of him.

One thing the Chinaman had taken notice of was that the cards they were playing with had backs exactly like those he had in his pocket.

He had been watching the man called Bill and had seen him slip three cards up one of his sleeves.

And at the same time he saw the Cockney put three or four cards on the chair he was sitting upon.

There was probably a hundred dollars, or a trifle more, on the table, and this was pretty high stakes for Wing to play with.

It was what was called a jack-pot, too, which means that no player could open it and begin betting unless he had a pair of jacks or better.

Jake dealt the cards around, after no one had been able to open it for three times in succession.

Wing made up his mind to open it this time.

It made no difference whether the cards to do it with were dealt to him or not.

He very deftly got four aces from the pack he had in his clothes.

He could do this easily enough, since he had placed them at the top of the pack when he put it in his pocket.

When he picked up the regular hand dealt to him by Jake the Celestial saw that he had four kings.

But that did not surprise him any.

He simply held one of the kings and substituted the aces for the other four cards.

He paid not the least attention to what the others were doing just then, and that made them think that he was one of the easiest victims they had ever played with.

Wing Wah promptly opened it, and then all three of the other players went in.

When the time came to draw cards he did not take any.

"Me standee pat," he said, with his bland smile.

Bill and Jake looked at each other, while the Cockney smiled softly to himself.

It happened that all hands were doing some cheating just then.

Bill and Jake were doing it jointly and the Cockney and Chinaman were each looking out for themselves.

And outside of the Chinaman no one suspected anything crooked was being done but what they were themselves doing.

The three each drew one card.

Then the betting began.

Wing Wah jabbered away in his pigeon-English and raised it every time it came his turn.

Bill and Jake thought that he had stood pat on the four kings that had been dealt him, and as they had arranged it between them that the former was to lay down four aces and scoop in the pot, they felt perfectly at their ease.

But when the Chinaman kept smiling and raising it every time Bill began to get just a trifle uneasy.

And as 'Arry Hatwood stuck at it with dogged determination, and Jake filled in every time it came around, quite a pile of money began to accumulate.

But all things must have an end.

Finally the Cockney hauled in his horns a trifle and called it.

It was Wing's bet, and when the others had put in their money he laid down his hand in plain view of them all and scooped the pile from the table as quick as lightning.

"Hold on!" cried Bill; "I've got four aces!"

"So 'ave Hi!" exclaimed 'Arry Hatwood.

"So be me, allee samee," retorted Wing, blandly. "Me gottee four aces and one kingee; Bill gottee ten-spot and Lingshman gottee Jackee. Wing Wah's hand best one out!"

"'Ow can there be twelve haces in a pack?" asked the Cockney, in surprise.

"Dat seem funny, allee samee," answered Wing, as he got up from the table.

The money was in his pocket, and that was the best part of it.

"Guessee go homee; Young Wild West findee fault with Wing Wah," he went on, as he headed for the door with drunken gravity.

"Hold on!" called out Jake, rising to his feet. "You're a cheat, you are! You jest give me my money back!"

"Oh, no!" was the reply, as Wing opened the door. "Me learn to play pokee in Weston; me blad man, and me shootee if dlon't lookee out!"

With that he flourished his revolver and began to whoop like he had heard the drunken cowboys do.

It is doubtful if the Chinaman would have got away alive if it had not been that he was Young Wild West's cook.

The men had considerable respect for Young Wild West, and that was why they concluded to let Wing Wah go with his winnings.

When he was once outside he headed in as straight a line as he could walk for the quarters of the Deadshot Band.

He got there all right and then tumbled into his bunk with his clothes on.

The Chinaman had certainly had an evening's spree!

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIGHT WITH THE SMUGGLERS AND WHAT FOLLOWED.

It was just a little after eight o'clock in the evening when Young Wild West and his Deadshot Band left the headquarters and went out to watch the Chinese smugglers.

The moon was up and it was a rather pleasant night.

At the suggestion of Deering they were to ride along in

a roundabout way till they came to a point above the camp that was on the opposite side of the river.

The revenue man had an idea that it would be best to make it appear that they came from a different direction than Juniper Falls when they showed up to the smugglers.

He was quite confident that they would try to get the goods they had in camp across the river that night.

And he also knew that there were so many of them that they depended on making a resistance in case they were stopped.

Young Wild West was doing a lot of thinking as he rode along at the head of his band.

He was wondering who was going to be hurt when the smuggling business was put to a stop there.

He knew very well that such a state of affairs could not possibly exist if Colonel Denny attended to his duty.

That pointed plainly that there was trouble ahead for the colonel.

But Wild had agreed to assist in putting down the smugglers, and he was not going to quit because there were some traitors in the camp.

He led his brave band on and presently they reached a point where he thought it was proper to head for the river.

He gave the word and then pulled his horse around.

Soon they were on Canadian soil.

But when they got to the river all on the opposite side was in darkness.

"They are either very quiet or else they have moved down the river to the dividing line," said Deering.

"We will go and see if they have moved down," answered Wild, who had an idea that they had done so.

It struck him that they should have followed the river bank in coming there instead of going in the roundabout way.

Wild had become pretty well acquainted with the marks that denoted the border that afternoon, and as they rode along the bank of the river he could see the hill that marked the point where the Souris river split the line.

And just as he saw this he heard the splashing of oars.

"The smugglers are crossing the river!" he exclaimed.

"If we hurry a little we will be in time to nip them just as they land, boys!"

Away they went on a swift gallop.

But unfortunately there was a little creek just ahead, which could not be crossed owing to the treacherous mud at the bottom.

They were forced to ride off to the right till it got so narrow that the horses could leap over it.

Wild on his handsome sorrel led the way.

After him they came two and three at a time.

Five minutes later they reached a point where it was plain sailing straight for the river bank.

As they rounded a bunch of trees and came in sight of the water just ahead of them an unexpected thing happened.

Four or five rifle shots rang out from a boat that was

well out in the stream and the bullets whistled about their heads like a swarm of bees.

"They have opened the game, have they?" cried Young Wild West. "Well, that means that there is going to be a fight, I guess. Steady, boys!"

Straight ahead of him Wild saw a boat that had just landed.

Three Chinamen were hurriedly taking out chests of tea and some packages of different shapes.

When they saw the horsemen dashing toward them they ceased in the work, and one of them drew an ugly-looking sword and a revolver.

Then another volley was fired from one of the boats that had not yet landed.

Jack Robedee lost a lock of hair, but as that was all the damage that had been done, so far, they paid no attention to it.

Our hero began swinging his lariat.

Down to the river bank rode Young Wild West's Deadshot Band.

The Chinese smugglers strove to get the boat off, but could not do so.

Just then Wild let his lasso fly, and as it tightened about the neck of one of the three, the Chinaman with the sword cut the lariat in two.

"Give them fits, boys!" cried Wild.

As he spoke he fired a shot and struck the fellow who had the sword.

Down went the heavy weapon and the Mongolian sprang into the boat, firing his revolver as fast as he could as he did so.

A volley was fired at the other boats, and, realizing that they had struck the wrong people, the smugglers started to make for the Canadian side.

Crack! Crack! Crack--cr-a-a-c-c-ck!

Another volley was fired by the Deadshot Band with telling effect.

As one of the three Chinamen who had been trying to unload the boat had been nearly choked by the noose and another had been shot in the wrist by Wild, there was but one left.

He was groveling in the sand, a picture of terror and despair.

Seeing that the other boats were moving for the opposite shore as fast as the frightened smugglers could make them go, Wild gave the order to cease firing.

"I guess that will do for to-night," he said. "Dismount, some of you, and get these bales and bundles back into the boat. We have made a pretty good haul, I think, for the first try at the game."

"I reckon we have," retorted Cheyenne Charlie, as he sprang lightly from the saddle. "Git up, you yaller-skinned heathen! I guess I'll tie you up a bit."

He gave the Chinaman on the ground a smart kick and forced him up as though he had been set upon springs.

Jim Dart and Lively Rick also dismounted.

In a very few minutes the two smugglers had their hands

tied behind their backs and the merchandise that had been dumped on the river bank was placed back in the boat.

"Someone has got to take this down the river to Juniper Falls," remarked Jim Dart. "Who shall it be, Wild?"

"You and I will do it, I guess," was the quick reply.

"Charlie, you can lead my horse back and Rick can take Jim's."

"All right!" came from the two selected ones.

"Give us a lift to push the boat off, and then you can follow the river bank and keep along with us as we row down."

"Good enough!" exclaimed Charlie. "This are what I call a pretty lively evening. If it keeps up like this things won't be so very dull up here after all."

The rest of the boats had reached the other side by this time, so the river was perfectly clear.

It was rather wide at that point, but down at Juniper Falls, a mile below, it was so narrow that a ten-year-old boy could easily throw a stone across.

There were two pairs of oars in the boat, and, taking them, Wild and Jim began rowing down the stream with their load of merchandise and the three Chinamen.

"This is what I call a mixed cargo," said Jim, smiling at the array of stuff in the boat.

"Teas and silks mostly, I guess," answered Wild.

"And three yellow-skinned smugglers."

"Yes, they help to make up the cargo."

At an easy stroke they rowed down the river, the rest of the Band of Deadshots keeping even with them as they rode along the bank.

As they neared the narrow part of the river there were so many trees on either side that the moon became obscured.

That made it as dark as pitch.

And to make it worse for them the horsemen were forced to ride inland a ways to escape another of the muddy-bottomed creeks.

The two boys were compelled to row much slower to prevent the boat running aground.

All was as silent as the grave for the next two minutes.

They could hear nothing but the noise made by the dipping of their oars.

But suddenly the sharp ears of Young Wild West caught another sound.

It was a peculiar splashing noise at the stern of the boat.

Instantly he drew in his oars and stepped to the stern.

The next instant he saw a human form swimming rapidly for the shore.

The swimmer was heading for the Canadian side, too, which was not more than a dozen yards distant.

At first Wild thought that one of the captives had escaped, but a glance showed him that such was not the case.

They were lying in the bottom of the boat in a helpless condition.

Just then the boat came to a stop with a sudden jerk that threw our hero off his feet.

Down upon the Chinamen in the bottom of the boat he went with a crash.

Then the little craft began to move stern-foremost for the shore.

Jim had lost his balance, too, and as he strove to catch himself and keep from falling he let the oars go overboard.

"What's the matter, Wild?" he called out.

"We've been tricked," came the reply, as our hero quickly scrambled to a sitting posture.

Crack!

He caught a glimpse of the head and shoulders of the swimmer not far away and let him have a bullet.

The bullet hit the mark and the head went down almost instantly.

But that did not stop the boat from moving, as Wild supposed it would.

There was a quick jerk and it moved faster than ever.

"Wild, Wild, what does it all mean?"

"Steady, Jim! Have your shooter ready for the first living thing you see."

That was all the reply Dart got this time.

The next instant the boat was whisked under the drooping trees and then up a little creek.

Bump!

It came to a stop all of a sudden.

Again Wild and Jim lost their balance.

And before they could right themselves half a dozen forms sprang into the boat and upon them!

"Come over, boys!"

That was all that Young Wild West could call out, for a hand clutched him by the throat and shut off his wind.

But he had called out loudly enough to make his men on the opposite bank of the river hear.

"Whoopee! Whoopee!" he heard Cheyenne Charlie cry out. "Come on, boys! Wild and Jim have got into trouble."

That was all Wild heard just then, for a heavy sack was thrown over his head and he was dragged along through a maze of bushes and briars.

But not for a very long ways.

In about a minute he was lifted and dumped into a wagon, and as he rolled over he felt a body tumble on top of him.

He was certain that it was Jim Dart, and now being able to use his tongue to a slight degree, he asked:

"Is that you, Jim?"

"Yes," came the smothered reply.

"Keep still; don't go to yelling out, as it will only make matters worse. Charlie will find this trail easy enough without hearing a sound from us."

"That's right."

But had they wanted to call out their voices could not have been heard very far, as they were well smothered with sacks and blankets and were breathing with no little difficulty.

The wagon was now in motion, and by the jolting the boys knew it was going along at a pretty stiff pace.

Where they were being taken to they had no idea, but they knew they were on the Canadian side of the river and that the Deadshot Band would follow them to the last ditch.

The wagon must have proceeded along for a mile or two directly inland before it came to a stop.

And the instant it did stop the muffled forms in the bottom of it were pulled out.

As they had been securely bound at the start, they were utterly helpless.

As though they had been nothing more than a couple of sacks of potatoes, they were dragged over the ground for a few feet and then the sack happened to slip so Wild could look out from a hole that was in it.

In that brief glance he saw that he was being taken into a log house that was white-washed and of a very neat appearance.

That was all, for it was as dark as the grave inside, and when he was allowed to drop to the floor he could do nothing but listen.

Young Wild West and Jim Dart were in what might be called a tight box.

CHAPTER VIII.

SAVED BY A WOMAN.

Wild and Jim were scarcely dropped upon the floor of the cabin than they heard someone begin to fumble with a lock right near them.

"I can't see," they heard a voice say. "Strike a light jest for a minute."

"No strikee lighttee!" exclaimed a voice which was unmistakably Chinese. "If strikee lighttee mebbe Melican mans come and see. No strikee lighttee; open door to cellar and hurry upee!"

There was some more fumbling and not a few impatient remarks, and then the trapdoor the man was fooling with was opened.

Two or three pairs of hands seized the helpless forms of the two boys and they were dragged into a cellar in short order.

A strong smell of whisky pervaded the place, and the instant he recognized this fact Wild came to the conclusion that this must be the place where 'Arry Hatwood got his whisky that he sold to the soldiers and others on the other side of the river.

In spite of his perilous position, Wild began to grow interested.

He had been anxious to solve the whisky problem, anyhow, and now here was a chance—providing, of course, that he escaped with his life.

But he had been in many worse scrapes than this and had got out of them all right.

That is the way he figured it.

The boys were tossed not very gently on a pile of straw and then the sacks were removed from their heads.

Almost at the same instant a light was struck.

Then Wild and Jim saw a roughly-dressed man applying a match to a lantern.

Near him stood two Chinamen, plainly the ones who had assisted in bringing the boys in the house from the wagon.

Wild thought it about time he had something to say now, so, directing his gaze upon the man with the lantern, he remarked:

"Well, what did you bring us fellows here for?"

"Eh!" exclaimed the man, showing considerable surprise at the cool way he spoke.

"What did you bring us fellows here for? That is what I said."

"Melican bloy shuttee up!" cried one of the Chinamen, and he kicked Wild in the ribs to emphasize his remark.

"All right, you yellow-skinned rascal!" was the reply. "When I get free I will remember you. I'll make you wish that you never kicked me, I'll bet a silver quarter to a five-dollar goldpiece! I'll know you by that scar on the left of your nose, so you had better look out for me!"

The Chinaman raised his foot to administer another kick to him, but at that moment the form of a female bounded forward.

"No you don't, you ugly heathen! I ain't goin' to allow ther boy to be kicked by ther likes of you! Git out of here, ther pair of yer!"

It was an elderly woman who had interfered.

Her face was anything but beautiful and her frame was as large and as powerful as that of a man.

But she plainly showed that there was something in her above the common brute.

The Mongolians looked at her as though they would like to resent her words, but she quickly whipped out a big six-shooter from the folds of her dress and held it out menacingly.

"I'm boss here!" she cried. "Git a move on yer!"

"No wantee go up; Melican mans catchee us," said one of them, shrugging his shoulders.

"Git on up there an' run your chances!"

"Go on, Hop an' Sam!" spoke up the man with the lantern. "You hev got ter do as she says."

The Chinamen no longer hesitated.

Had it been a man with a revolver instead of a woman they might have tried to argue the question further, but as it was, they felt that they had nothing to do but to obey.

So up the narrow, straight steps they went, closing the trapdoor after them.

"Now then, Dan Ricketts," said the woman, turning to the man, who evidently was her husband, "what in thunder did you bring these two boys here fur?"

"We had to bring 'em somewheres, didn't we?" was the reply.

"No! You could have let 'em go after you got hold of

ther stuff. But now since you've brung 'em here, what are we goin' to do with 'em?"

"There's only one thing to do with 'em," was the answer.

"You mean kill 'em?"

"What else kin we do with 'em?"

"Well, I don't know. But it seems to me that they are too young an' good lookin' to die."

"Pshaw! What do you care about good looks. They was interferin' with ther Chinamen in gittin' ther stuff across ther river, wasn't they?"

"You said they was.

"Well, they was. An' now because you think they're good-lookin' young fellers they hadn't ought to be put out of ther way, so's they can't tell on us."

"Dan Ricketts, if you was as good lookin' as either one of 'em I might have reason to feel proud of yer. Why, you ain't half as handsome as your brother over in Juniper Falls!"

"An' you ain't as good lookin' as ther old black an' white cow we've got out in ther pen!"

"Dan Ricketts, I'll have you understand that I was called a handsome gal in my day."

"But yer got bravely over it, didn't yer?"

"Yes, an' from ther nursin' of you when you had ther smallpox, that's how I got bravely over it. I took ther disease an' it left me with an ugly face, 'cause you wouldn't raise a hand to keep me from scratchin' myself."

"Never mind about that now, Meg."

"Oh, yes! You kin say never mind that now. But I want you to understand that though I may be a bit ugly lookin', I've got a heart left. These two boys ain't goin' to be killed."

"But, Meg."

"No buts about it. They're goin' to be set free right now, if they'll promise me that they won't come back here an' bother us."

She brought her foot down vehemently to show that she meant business.

"S'pose they do promise you that they won't come back here, nor send anyone else here to bother us, would you believe they would keep their words?"

"Of course I would. I would believe either one of them. I kin read a face putty well when I sees it. Them boys ain't common villains, like you an' your brother across ther river was brought up. Why! Do you s'pose either of 'em would deceive all them what's been good to 'em an' work with that scoundrel of a Colonel Denny to rob his own government, like your brother's been doin' for ther last year or two? I guess not!"

"Shet up, Meg! You've said too much. Them boys can't git away from here alive, an' that settles it!"

"Look out, Dan Ricketts! Don't rile me too much. If you do ther old grudge will be apt to come up, an' then——"

"All right! All right!" and the man walked away.

The old woman promptly drew a knife and stepped over to where Wild and Jim lay.

"You've heard all what's been said, I s'pose, ain't you?"

"Yes," answered Wild.

"Will you promise not to interfere with our place in any way, then?"

"Yes."

"How about you?"

"I promise," said Jim.

"There's all ways of makin' a livin', you know," she resumed. "We have our way, which is the makin' an' sellin' of whisky. That's all there is to it, so you won't say a word that will do us harm, will you?"

"No!" answered the boys, and they meant what they said, too.

"I know you won't. I kin tell an honest face, even if it is in ther candlelight. There!" and she quickly cut their bonds with the knife she held in her hand.

Wild and Dart lost no time in getting on their feet.

"Thank you!" they both said at the same time.

They were much relieved, for at one time their case had looked to be a desperate one.

The woman's husband stood holding the lantern, a sullen expression on his countenance.

"What way are yer goin' to let 'em out?" he asked.

"Ther same way they was brought in," she answered.

"Good enough!" and a pleased expression came over his face.

"I know what you're thinkin' about," she said, with a laugh.

"Yer know what I'm thinkin' about? What does yer mean, Meg?"

"You are thinkin' that if I let 'em out of ther front door of ther hut ther two Chinese fellers will soon put ther fin- ish to 'em, don't yer?"

"Never mind what I was thinkin' about. Go on an' have your own way about ther whole thing."

"I'm goin' to, or there'll be a wind-up of business atween me an' you."

As she said this she walked over to the stairway and stooped down to the floor.

When she arose she had the weapons taken from Wild and Jim.

"Here!" she exclaimed. "Now, I guess ther Chinese fellers won't be able to git much ther best of yer."

The face of Dan Ricketts fell when he saw the weapons placed in the hands of the boys.

The next instant a cloud of anger came over it.

"I'll fix you, you hussy!" he cried. "If we are raided here I'll kill you, jest as sure as my name are Dan Ricketts!"

"See here!" spoke up Young Wild West, facing the irate villain. "We promised that we would say nothing about your place or what kind of business you are in. We mean to keep our word to the very letter. But I want to tell you one thing, and that is that don't you run across us and try

to kill us. If you do, you will never make another drop of moonshine whisky!"

"That's ther way to talk to him!" exclaimed Meg. "Now, boys, come on upstairs."

She led the way and Jim came next, Wild bringing up the rear.

It was dark above, but the light from the lantern below just made sufficient light for Jim to see the forms of the two Chinamen as he stepped on the floor of the cabin.

They were sneaking toward the open trapdoor, each with an ugly-looking knife in his hand.

"Stop right where you are!" he cried, leveling his revolver at the foremost one.

Instead of obeying the command, the Mongolian made a leap to plunge the knife into the breast of the boy.

Crack!

The aim of Dart was true.

Down went the would-be assassin like a log.

The other villain drew a pistol and fired just as Wild stepped on the floor.

The bullet hit the old woman in the arm and she uttered a scream of pain.

Crack!

It was Wild who fired this time, and then, instead of one, there were two dead Chinamen in the cabin.

"Good! Good!" screamed the old woman. "It serves them right."

The words were scarcely out of her mouth when the door of the cabin came crashing in as though it had been hit by a locomotive.

"Whoopee!" shouted the voice of Cheyenne Charlie.

Young Wild West's Deadshot Band had arrived.

"Easy, boys!" called out Wild. "It is all right. We are here and not hurt a particle."

"Hooray!" cried Jack Robedee, and then a cheer went up that made the rafters of the cabin fairly tremble.

"Go down in the cellar and close the trap," whispered our hero to the old woman, who was now trembling like a leaf. "Neither you nor your husband or your property shall be touched. Do as I say!"

Meg did not hesitate a second.

Like a shadow she went down the narrow steps, closing the door gently after her.

Then Wild and Jim went outside.

The Deadshots had dismounted, and when they saw them safe and sound they picked them up bodily and began carrying them around on their shoulders.

The majority of them were for going into the cabin, but Wild stopped them.

"There is nothing to be found inside but two dead Chinamen," he said. "They brought us here in a wagon after they got hold of us in the boat, and we managed to get the best of them. We shot them in short order."

"Good enough!"

"Pretty work!"

The men were delighted, and they asked for no further explanation.

As both the boys' horses were there, they mounted them in short order.

"I guess we had better get back to the United States as soon as possible," observed Young Wild West.

Just then the shrill cry of a female in distress rang out from the woods near at hand.

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT COLONEL DENNY WAS UP TO.

We must now go back to the time when Ricketts, the colonel's teamster, was placed in the guardhouse with the Chinaman.

The teamster was sullen and morose and the Chinaman was badly frightened.

"We no gittee out?" said the latter, questioningly, when they were alone.

"If we don't I guess there will be something funny happen around here before long," was the reply. "Colonel Denny don't dare to keep me here. An' I don't believe he dares to keep you here, either. He's as much in the mud as I'm in ther mire, an' you--well, you're nothin' but a Chinee smuggler, an' it ain't likely your word would go very far. No heathen's word will go far, you know."

"So be," retorted the yellow-skinned smuggler, nodding, though he did not quite understand what his companion was driving at. The soldier who had been in the muss when Young Wild West and his friends first rode into town was a prisoner in the guardhouse, too.

He had sobered up considerable since the fun he had had with Arry Hatwood, the Cockney, and he was anxious to get out of the scrape he was in.

He knew he had no right to arrest the Cockney at the time, and when he thought how his companion had lost his life from it, he was doing anything but pleasant thinking.

"What are you fellows in here for?" he asked, walking over to the two men who had been caught smuggling goods from the Canadian side.

"That's what I call none of your business!" retorted Ricketts.

"Oh! you needn't be so saucy about it. I don't know as I care to know, anyway."

"Well, what did you ask fur, then?"

The soldier walked away.

He was sober and he did not care to get in an argument there in that place.

Ricketts and the Chinaman sat down and then no one spoke a word for the next half hour.

Then a messenger came to the bars that divided the place off from the storeroom of the barracks with a note for Ricketts.

The teamster took it just as though he had expected to receive it, and when he had torn it open read the following:

"As soon as Young Wild West and his band starts out to-night will see to it that you and the Chinaman are set free. Be patient and take things cool.

"COL. DENNY."

"That sounds a little more like it," said the teamster when he had explained the contents of the note to his companion. "We are all right to get out now. Ther colonel is goin' to wait till ther young feller what collared us goes away with his gang to-night, and then we gits set free. Well, I reckon we kin wait till that time, can't we?"

"Pully good, so be," answered the Chinaman, grinning in a delighted way.

The man who had been locked up for his performance with the Cockney and because his companion had been shot by the hunter, listened to what the teamster was telling the Chinaman.

When he had gleaned the facts of the case he made up his mind that he was going to get out, too.

"If ther colonel is goin' to set them fellers free, I guess he'll set me free, too," he mused. "He ain't got no right to set them out of here, 'cause what's he got to do with 'em, when they're here for smugglin'? I'll either git out or someone will know something afore many hours."

Then he settled down and took a nap.

It was quite a long wait, but all three of the prisoners made the best of it.

After what seemed to be a long time after their supper was brought to them, a blue-coated guard came up and unlocked the door of the prison pen.

Not a word did he say, but when the door was open he walked away about his business, leaving the way clear for them to get out of the place.

The imprisoned guard was the first to take advantage of the open door.

He got up, and, putting on his hat, walked out as calmly as though it was all arranged for him to do so.

Ricketts and the Chinaman were not long in following his example.

"You'd better go back in there," said the teamster when they got outside.

"I'd be a fool to do that," was the reply. "The door was opened, wasn't it?"

"Yes, but not for you."

"Oh! Well, if the colonel could let you out, I guess he could let me out, too. Good-night! I am going to look up some whisky."

The teamster made no reply, but headed for the bank of the river, followed by the rascally Mongolian.

"We'll try an' find ther Englishman's boat," said the former. "Then we kin git across and stay there."

"So be pully good," said his companion.

As luck would have it, they were not long in finding Arry Hatwood's boat.

It was moored in a snug little place where he always kept it when on that side of the river.

Ricketts was just about to untie the little craft when the figure of a man loomed up through the darkness.

"Who goes there?" asked a low voice.

It was unquestionably Colonel Denny who was the challenger.

Ricketts recognized him instantly.

"It's me—Ricketts," he answered in a hoarse whisper.

Then the man, who wore a long cloak to conceal the shape of his form, quickly advanced.

"Ricketts," said he, "you are not to tell who set you free, no matter what happens, do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand, colonel."

"All right, then. Here's some money for you. If I was you I wouldn't come across from the Canadian side again very soon, especially while Young Wild West and his Deadshot Band is around here. You can't tell what might happen to you if you get caught again."

"I won't come back. I'm goin' right to my brother's whisky still an' stay there."

"Good! I will be over there to see you before long. I expect to meet my future wife there almost any time now. I don't know just what time she will be brought there, but I paid considerable money to a couple of my men to bring her over from Hastings."

"It's ther gal what was here in town last summer for a few weeks before your daughter died, ain't it?"

"Yes, that's the girl."

"I thought she wouldn't have anything to do with you, colonel."

"She wouldn't. You see—I may as well tell you—she is coming to your brother's whisky still against her will. I am going to happen along and make out that I rescue her. Then she will hardly refuse to marry me, I guess."

"You've got a great head on you, colonel."

"I confess that I think I have. I have made lots of money since I have been stationed up here on the border, and I am willing to spend a good part of it to get that girl to marry me."

"Every one to his taste, colonel, but I never seen any good come of it when a feller gits in love an' goes to meddlin' with a gal what don't like him."

"Well, I don't think she exactly hates me."

"Maybe not, but when I seen her pull away from you that night last summer an' run for ther house I made up my mind that she didn't like you very much."

"Pshaw! She has forgotten all about that before this. Here I am a good-looking widower with a commission in the army—what better could she want than me for a husband?"

"I don't know, sir, I'm sure. Let me see, her name was Minnie Faulkner, wasn't it?"

"Yes, that is her name. Jove, Ricketts, you have a great memory."

"Yes, I guess I have. I could tell an awful lot if I wanted to, couldn't I?"

The rascally colonel shrugged his shoulders uneasily.

"No doubt you could, Ricketts; no doubt you could. But it wouldn't do for you to do it—it wouldn't pay you to do it."

"No, it wouldn't pay me unless——"

"Unless what, Ricketts?"

"Oh, nonsense! Let it go at that. Here I've got to live on British soil after this. That's bad enough, ain't it?"

"Well, not so bad. I see you are anxious to go, so go on. I'll see you in a day or two—just as soon as I hear that Minnie Faulkner has arrived at the still."

"Good-night, Colonel Denny."

"Good-night, Ricketts."

"Goodee night, so be!" spoke up the Chinaman.

Then the two got into the boat and pushed off, the army officer who was playing such a deep game in villainy stalking off in the direction of his quarters.

The two rascals soon reached the other side of the river.

Once there they tied the boat where its owner could easily find it, and then they headed for the town of Plunket, which was a mile above Juniper Falls on the Canadian side.

Plunket was quite a town, it having a population of perhaps five or six hundred.

Ricketts did intend to make straight for his brother's still when he first started, but he changed his mind when crossing the river.

He was without weapons of any sort, and as he had money with him, he thought it would be a good idea to fit himself out.

Then if he should happen to run across the daring young fellow who had arrested him he would make short work of him—that is, if he should happen to be on the Canadian side.

The two soon got to the town and stocked up with a revolver and a knife apiece.

Then they thought they needed something to drink.

It took them much longer to get what they wanted in that line than it did in the other.

So in all nearly two hours had elapsed when they approached the whisky still of Dan Ricketts.

They got there just as Young Wild West and Jim Dart were ascending the steps from the cellar with the woman who had set them at liberty.

But they did not go around to the front of the cabin.

There was another way to get in the still, which was in a big natural cave.

What seemed to be a good-sized cowshed marked the entrance to the secret place.

Ricketts and the Chinaman had just reached this shed when the shots fired in the cabin rang out.

"Somethin's wrong!" cried the teamster. "We'd better hide right here."

He was very much frightened just then, for it struck him that Young Wild West was there.

And the boy had made a deep impression on him by his remarkable coolness, in spite of his thoughts that he was going to kill him when he met him.

The two got into a corner of the cowshed and laid low.

They had not been there but a couple of seconds when they heard the thunder of hoofs.

This frightened them more than ever, but as the sounds stopped almost immediately they began to feel easier.

But just then they heard whispered voices outside. Ricketts' bravery left him then.

He began to tremble like a leaf, while the Chinaman, who had lost his nerve almost at the sound of the revolver shots, began to mutter incoherently.

Ricketts was not a brave man, anyhow.

Cruel in the extreme when he had things his own way, but a miserable coward when things went against him.

"Never mind prayin' to any of your stone images," whispered Ricketts, trying hard to be brave. "Jest git your shooter ready fur business."

"Me, me—" stammered the Celestial.

His teeth began to chatter so the sounds could plainly be heard.

"Stop that!" cautioned Ricketts, excitedly. "Stop it, or ther fust thing you know you'll have a whole gang on us. Stop it, I say! Can't you——"

He did not finish the sentence, for at that very instant the shrill scream of a female rang out so near him that he involuntarily sprang to his feet.

The next minute two men came in the cowshed, dragging a struggling form with them.

"Keep still, or I'll be tempted ter throttle yer!" cried a hoarse voice. "Confound this gal kidnappin' business, anyhow!"

Ricketts breathed a sigh of relief.

He recognized the voice as belonging to one of the colonel's trusted men.

He realized just what had happened.

The two men had arrived with the girl Colonel Denny hoped to make his wife.

CHAPTER X.

THINGS GROW INTERESTING.

Young Wild West no sooner heard the cry of distress than he urged his horse in the direction of the strip of woods.

Jim Dart and Cheyenne Charlie started after him in a twinkling, and then came the whole crowd of Deadshots.

As the cry was not repeated, Wild could not exactly locate the spot, but he made straight for a strip of woods that could be plainly seen in the moonlight.

And in doing this he passed the cowshed unnoticed.

As he reined in his horse and found it as still as the grave there he made up his mind that he had come to the wrong place.

Consequently, there was only one thing left to do, and that was to find the proper place.

That a woman or girl had shouted for help all hands were certain of.

"This way, boys!" called out Wild, and then he headed along the edge of the woods.

In less than two seconds the cowshed loomed up before him.

"Be careful now, and search every spot," he observed, as he dismounted.

Revolver in hand, he hurried about, looking for the person who had uttered the cry.

But search as he might, he could not find the least sign of any person in the vicinity.

And so it was with the rest of them.

They went under the shed, but could find nothing but a cow that was placidly chewing her cud there

"It must have been ther cow what made ther noise," suggested Lively Rick.

"Nonsense!" answered our hero. "It was a woman. I am just as certain of it as I am that I am here."

"And so am I," added Jim.

"Well, if it was a woman, where is she now?" asked Cheyenne Charlie.

Wild was doing a whole lot of thinking

It occurred to him all at once that it must have been Meg who had uttered the cry

It was more than probable that there was an outside entrance to the cellar, and she could have easily got out there time enough to utter the cry.

But if it had been her she was in the clutch of someone at the time; the tone of voice indicated that plain enough.

And that being the case, Young Wild West felt that he had ought to render her assistance in return for what she had done for him and Jim.

But where was she?

That was the question that puzzled him.

"Jim," said he, "have you an idea who it was?"

"It must have been Meg, the old woman who set us free," replied Dart in a whisper.

"That is what I think."

"Someone had hold of her and they choked her off after she let out the first cry, too."

"That's right."

"What are we going to do about it?"

"Jim, I don't know."

Wild was certainly stumped.

He had promised the old woman not to mention anything about the still, and now it seemed probable that she was being killed by her husband and his assistants, or had been killed already.

What course was he to take?

After a moment's thought he came to the conclusion to let matters rest as they were for the present.

"I guess we will get to the other side of the river, boys," he said, after a rather lengthy pause.

This was satisfactory to everyone but Cheyenne Charlie.

The scout had noticed Wild and Jim whispering, and he was of the opinion that they knew more about the cry for help than they cared to let the others know just then.

But Charlie was not the one to say anything.

He would wait till Wild told him about it, though he was rather anxious to know what it all meant.

Wild led the way back to the river.

Charlie showed him the place where they had crossed it, and then the horses were put to the water.

They swam over in a very short time.

Our hero had concluded to come back to the whisky still before morning, though.

He felt that he would like to find out just how it was located and how the Englishman, 'Arry Hatwood, got the stuff across the river.

And then he wanted to find out what had happened to the old woman, if it was her they had heard utter the cry.

When the Deadshot Band got across the river they were less than a mile from Juniper Falls.

That made them get back in short order.

Deering was elated at what had happened.

He knew the Chinese smugglers would not be apt to bring any more goods over that night.

But at the suggestion of our hero he had four men posted along the river half a mile apart.

As soon as they saw anything suspicious they were to ride for the barracks and let the Deadshot Band know of it.

Young Wild West was more interested in the whisky still than anything else just now.

He decided to go back there and take Jim Dart and Cheyenne Charlie with him.

He reached this conclusion just as they came in sight of the quarters they occupied.

And at the same time something happened that did not bear very well with Deering's judgment.

One of the men patrolling the river bank came in with the news that there were several rowboats going up and down the river as though looking for a place to land on the American side.

"We had better go back, I suppose," said the revenue man. "By jove! I thought they had enough of it for one night."

"We will go back with pleasure," answered our hero. "But I will leave the men in your charge. I am going across the river, and Charlie and Jim are going with me."

"What!"

"That is what I have decided to do."

"What are you going to do that for?"

"I want to find out what that scream meant."

"You mean the scream that sounded like the voice of a woman in distress near the cabin where you shot the two Chinamen?"

"Yes, that's just what I mean. It worries me to think that someone was in danger, and we not able to give assistance."

"It will be a little dangerous for you to go across the river, especially if any of the smugglers should meet you."

"Of course there will be a little danger attached to it. If there were not there would be no fun in going. I can't get along without plenty of excitement, you know."

"You are slightly different from me, then."

There was no time for further conversation.

They mounted their horses again and set out.

"I want a boat," said Wild to Deering, as they neared the river where the smugglers were reported as being.

"I don't think there is any down this way," was the reply.

"Well, we will get one, anyhow. If we can't do any better we will take one of the smugglers' boats. They hauled Jim and I ashore in a hurry to-night, so we may be able to give them a taste of it. You fellows go on and attend to the Chinamen; I guess we will stop here and leave our horses."

Deering and the rest of the Deadshot Band went on without another question.

Wild looked around till he found a good place to tie the horses.

He soon did right near the bank of the river in a clump of trees.

When this was done the three began going along the bank on the lookout for a boat.

They kept well in the shadows so they could not be seen from the river.

Five minutes later they saw a boat.

It was pushing off from the opposite shore, and there were two men in it.

"I reckon if them fellers come over here we'll have a boat," observed Cheyenne Charlie.

"Sure we will!" exclaimed Jim Dart.

"Just wait and see if they do come over," said Wild. "Ah! they are heading for a point down below us. They must want to get under the willows on this side of the river."

"Well, let's git down there, so's we'll be ready when ther measly coyotes come along," suggested the scout.

Our hero thought this a good idea, so the three at once set out.

They could hear the measured strokes of the oars now, and they knew the boat was probably coming close to the American side, even if it did not make a landing there.

In three minutes they reached a bank where the willows hung over the narrowest part of the stream.

Some of the limbs ran out for a dozen feet or more, and Wild quickly began sizing them up to note how strong they looked.

The moon was shining brightly, but it was difficult to see very good under the willows, unless one got where a rift of moonlight came through.

Young Wild West soon found a place where he could see pretty good.

When he became certain that the boat was heading for that point he began to climb one of the willows.

He had not the slightest difficulty in doing this, since he did not have to reach any higher than his head to get hold of the limbs.

Once on what he considered to be a good, sound limb, he began working his way out over the water.

Charlie and Jim were alternately watching him and the approaching boat.

They felt like clapping their hands with joy when they saw the boat shoot in and dart under the willows about fifty yards above them.

Then they heard the oars dropped in the bottom of the boat, quickly followed by the splashing sounds caused by paddling.

Wild heard it, too, and he prepared to give the two men in the boat a surprise.

Charlie and Jim did not know exactly what he proposed to do, but they knew he would not make a mistake.

They kept their hands on their revolvers and waited.

Nearer came the boat, and presently they could see its outlines as it was pushed slowly along under the willows.

In half a minute more it was opposite them, less than ten feet from the bank.

Then something startling took place.

There was a crashing sound as a limb broke, and then—

Bump!

Wild had tumbled squarely into the boat.

He had been in the act of reaching down to grab one of the occupants by the collar when the strain broke the brittle willow branch.

But he was not half as much surprised as the two in the boat were.

He was on his feet in an instant, a revolver in either hand.

"Make a move or utter the least sound and you are dead men!" he cried in a meaning tone that was plenty loud enough for those on the bank to hear.

The two men were so badly frightened that they gave in at once.

They were not Chinamen, as our friends had supposed at first, but were rough-looking fellows, like the majority of the hunters and fishermen that hung around that vicinity.

"Don't shoot, mister!" said one of them in a low whisper. "We ain't goin' to move."

"Sensible fellows," answered Wild. "You just take an oar and push the boat in shore. Don't attempt to do anything else, for if you do it will be the last thing you will attempt on earth!"

The man very readily did as he was told, while his companion kneeled in the bottom of the boat with his hands high over his head.

The bow of the little craft sheered in and struck the bank gently.

The moment it did so Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart sprang in and seized the two men.

They must have thought their time had come, for they began to struggle in a desperate manner.

But Wild quickly quieted them by exclaiming:

"If you want to die just keep that up!"

They became silent and motionless instantly.

"Now, then, I want to ask you a question or two," he resumed.

"What's ther matter, anyway?" retorted one of them.

"We're honest fellers on a little errand of our own. We ain't goin' to interfere with anybody."

Our hero knew the man was a rascal by the tone of his voice.

"You are not telling the truth," he retorted. "Now, then, I want to know what you are going after—or rather what you were going after when I dropped into your boat. If you don't tell me, off goes the top of your head! I mean business."

He spoke in such a way that the men believed he meant just what he said.

And to make it more impressive, he pressed the muzzle of his revolver against the head of the fellow he was addressing.

"I'll tell you!" cried the man, excitedly. "Don't shoot!"

"Tell me, then."

"We left something on the bank on this side of ther river when we was over here before to-night."

"What did you leave here?"

"A red handkerchief with something tied up in it."

"What was tied up in it?"

"Money."

"Money, eh? Where did you get the money?"

"A man paid it to us for bringing a young lady across from Plunket."

Young Wild West grew very much interested when he heard this.

He was quite certain that the man was telling the truth, for he could feel him trembling like a leaf.

"Where did you take the young lady?" he resumed, giving the fellow's temple a little dig with the muzzle of the revolver.

"To Dan Ricketts' shanty. She is a relative of Dan's wife, so they said."

The last words were spoken in a tone that indicated the man was lying.

Wild knew it, but he thought he had gleaned enough on that line, and that he had solved the mystery of the cry of distress over near Ricketts' shanty.

"But he wanted to find out who it was that had given the men the money they spoke of.

"See here!" he said sternly. "I want you to tell me who gave you the money. In the first place, I don't believe anyone gave you the red handkerchief with money tied in it. I am of the opinion that it was to be left somewhere on this side of the river for you. Now, who agreed to give it to you? Tell the truth or I will surely press the trigger!"

"Ther colonel at ther soldiers' headquarters," answered the man.

"Colonel Denny?"

"Yes."

"I thought as much. Well, come on! We will go and see if he left the money there for you. Charlie, just tie them up so there won't be any danger of them getting away."

Wild and his two partners now made up their minds that they were having quite a night's adventure.

Things along the Canadian border were not so dull, after all.

CHAPTER XI.

SOME RISKY WORK.

Cheyenne Charlie had one of the men tied and was starting on the other when Young Wild West stopped him.

"Never mind binding him," he said. "Let him pilot us to the place where the money was to be left."

"All right," was the answer, and when he had removed the shooter and sheath-knife from the man's belt he handed him an oar and told him to go ahead.

The fellow was willing enough to do this.

"Be sure that you take us to the right spot," cautioned Wild. "We don't want the money and will give it to you, if we are not compelled to shoot you for being dishonest."

There was no reply to this.

It was more than evident that the two men were not the bravest kind of people.

That they were rascals our friends had not the least doubt.

The fellow with the oar paddled the boat along beneath the willows for about a hundred yards and then, looking carefully ahead of him, pushed to the bank.

"Here's ther place, I reckon," he said.

"All right," answered Wild. "Get out and get it."

The command was obeyed readily enough, our hero following him.

The prisoner walked carefully up the bank, measuring his steps as he went, and finally paused with his foot on a good-sized stone that was partly covered with moss.

The moonlight shone through the foliage and Wild could see the stone quite plainly.

"Turn it over!" he commanded, for he readily comprehended that it was there the man expected to find the money.

The captive stooped and pushed the stone over.

Then he picked up a red handkerchief that was pretty well knotted.

"Here it is!" he said. "I thought it would be here."

"The colonel agreed to place it here, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, now there is one more thing I want to ask you."

"What is it?"

"Is the young lady safe at Dan Ricketts' place—I mean is she safe from being harmed?"

"Oh, yes! Ther colonel is goin' to come there an' git her, an' then he's goin' to marry her."

"Did she agree to marry him?"

"I don't know nothin' about that. All's we know is that we was to git this money if we got her to Dan Ricketts' place. We got her there, but we had a putty hard time of it, I kin tell you! Now we've got our money an' you've got us!"

"That's true enough, and I guess we had better hold you for awhile, too."

"You ain't goin' to hold us prisoners, are you?"

"What else can we do with you? If we were to let you go you would spoil our game. Charlie, just put the other fellow out here, and then we will tie them to this tree till we come back."

"Don't tie us up," pleaded the man. "We won't say a word of what's happened if you let us go."

"I couldn't think of trusting you. We will tie you to this tree here, and then borrow your boat for a little while. When we come back we will let you go. Don't ask me to do anything different, for I won't listen to you."

That silenced them.

Evidently they thought that was a great deal better than being shot or taken to the barracks as prisoners.

Jim took care of the boat while Wild and Charlie tied the two rascals to the tree, gagging them effectually as they did so and placing the handkerchief with the money in it between them.

As soon as they were satisfied that the men could not get away without the assistance of someone, they embarked in the boat and made for the other side of the river.

Jim did the paddling, while Wild and Charlie laid low in the boat.

Jim was keeping a sharp lookout both up and down the river.

But not a sign of anyone did he see.

The night was well advanced by this time, and as they had been on the go since a few minutes past eight, our friends were beginning to grow a trifle weary.

But the thought that they might be able to rescue the girl from the distillery made Wild and Jim anxious to keep at it.

Charlie, of course, was willing to stick at the work, though he had no idea that he was heading for a whisky still.

Wild had not told him who Dan Ricketts was and what his business consisted of.

He had promised the old woman Meg not to say anything about the place, and he meant to keep his word.

But he had not promised her that he would not return to the place.

That had not been required of him.

Jim soon landed the boat, and then they got out and hid it under a cluster of hanging branches.

Though the branches were without leaves, they would hide the craft from prying eyes in the darkness.

Both Wild and Jim knew the still could not be very far away, so they set out for it.

In a few minutes they came upon the trail the Deadshot Band had made in going there and back.

Then they hurried on, keeping in the shadows as much as possible.

It was not many minutes before the log shanty loomed up before them.

There was a light in the window now, and that made Wild give a nod of satisfaction.

"We don't want to make the least noise," he whispered. "Let us get up there and look in, if we possibly can. There is a shade hauled down, but there may be a crack we can see through."

They soon crawled up to the house.

Under the window they crept and then Wild raised himself cautiously and strove to look inside.

At first he could find no way to do so, but he kept on trying, and finally found a place where the shade did not quite reach across the window.

He got so he could take a pretty good look at one side of the room.

Almost the first object his eyes rested upon was the figure of Meg, the old woman who had released him and Jim during the early part of the night.

She was leaning on the table with her head down as though in slumber.

There were two rooms in the shanty, and Wild could see that the door of that which adjoined the one the old woman was in was closed, and that a chair was placed in such a position against it that it could not be opened from the other side.

"That is where the girl is, no doubt," he thought. "I wonder if there is a window to that room?"

He drew down beside his companions and in a low whisper told them what he had seen.

Then they each took a look.

Both Charlie and Jim agreed that the girl must be in the adjoining room.

"How are we going to get her out?" asked Jim.

"That seems to be easy enough," answered the scout. "I reckon we kin bust that door in in no time, an' then how long will it take us to throw that chair away from ther other door an' git her out?"

Charlie did not know that there was a cellar beneath the house, where probably half a dozen men were congregated.

If he had he would not have made such a suggestion.

"We will see if there is a window to that room," said Wild, not noticing what Charlie said.

He led the way around the house.

There was a window, sure enough.

But it was covered by a board shutter, which was closed tightly.

"If we can get that open we might be able to find out whether the girl is a prisoner inside," our hero said to his companions.

Jim looked around searchingly.

But he saw nothing that looked as though it might be used for opening the shutter.

"I guess I kin fix it," spoke up the scout, pulling out his hunting-knife.

"What are you going to do?" asked Dart.

"Use this for a screw-driver," was the reply. "We'll take off ther hinges; then ther blamed old shutter will come off, I reckon."

Wild nodded for him to go ahead.

Cheyenne Charlie had some good ideas sometimes.

The knife made an admirable screw-driver, and in five minutes' time he had the lower hinge free.

"Now for ther other one," he said. "Jim, you had better git up on my shoulders an' tackle that."

"All right," replied Jim, and he quickly did so.

All their conversation was carried on in low whispers.

It would have been almost impossible for anyone to have heard them from the inside had they been listening for them.

Dart got right at work on the hinge.

He soon had all the screws out.

As he dropped to the ground from Charlie's shoulders the shutter came loose.

It swung open from the hinge side a few inches, making considerable of a creaking noise.

Cheyenne Charlie took hold of it and pulled it out further.

Then Young Wild West gave a gentle tap on the window.

He knew he was running the risk of making a bad mistake, but he was in for rescuing the girl the colonel expected to force to become his wife, and he did not hesitate to do anything just then.

At first there came no answer from within, but a moment later there came a tap from the inside.

It was a peculiar tap, too, sounding as though it had taken considerable of an effort to make it.

And it was just once that they heard it.

Wild did not hesitate an instant after hearing the answering tap.

He took hold of the window-sash and strove to raise it.

It would not go up.

Then he gave a smart push on it.

It went in with the greatest of ease.

There was a bang, followed by a crashing of glass, and then the voice of a female exclaimed:

"Oh! Save me!"

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

As Wild heard the words "Oh! Save me!" he leaped into the window.

As quickly as he could he struck a match.

As the flickering flame enabled him to see he beheld a beautiful girl reclining on a couch.

Another glance and he saw that she was bound to the couch.

Her feet were close to the window, and some of the glass from the broken sash had dropped upon her.

But he did not wait to take note of anything further.

He whipped out his knife and cut her loose in the twinkling of an eye, not saying a word.

Picking her up in his arms, he thrust her through the window just as the door of the room opened and the old woman entered with a lighted candle.

Crack!

It was Jim Dart who fired.

Out went the candle, for it was that he had fired at.

Cheyenne Charlie took the girl from Wild and then the dashing young deadshot leaped out of the window.

"We must run for it!" he said. "Are you able to help yourself, miss?"

"Oh, yes!" she answered. "I am so glad you came to save me. I can run, thank you!"

She was pretty cool, considering what she had passed through.

All four of them ran as fast as they could, under the circumstances, for they did not want to leave the girl behind.

Wild held tightly to her hand, and this enabled her to go a trifle faster than she could otherwise have done.

When she had run till she could do so no longer Wild ordered a halt for a moment.

"Let them come now if they want to," he remarked. "I will guarantee that they will be picked off as fast as they show themselves."

But there was not the least sign of a pursuer.

"I guess they don't want to bother with us," observed Jim.

Then in a whisper he added to Wild:

"I guess I shot that candle from the old woman's hand before she had time to recognize you."

"Yes, I think so," was the reply.

Our friends thought it was funny why they were not pursued.

But there was nothing funny about it.

Colonel Denny had told Dan Ricketts that he was coming to take the girl away from his shanty when she got there, and do it in such a manner that she would think he was rescuing her.

So Ricketts and his wife thought it was the colonel who had broke the sash in and took the girl, and they paid no further attention to the matter, beyond putting the shutter back in place.

They had been paid their money in advance, and that was all there was to it.

Had our friends known this they would not have been in such a hurry to leave.

They soon reached the boat and embarked for the other side.

When they got there they found the two prisoners just as they had left them.

"How have you been since we went over to the other side?" asked Jim Dart.

"Mighty uneasy," replied one of them. "We heard a lot of shootin' up ther river a little while ago. I guess ther Deadshot Band has been at work."

"Good enough!" said Wild. "I suppose you know that I am the head of the Deadshot Band, don't you?"

The men started and looked at him curiously.

"You ain't Young Wild West, are you?" queried one of them.

"That's just who I am."

"An' you're goin' to let us go now, ain't you?" spoke up the other of them.

Our hero thought a moment.

He came to the conclusion that it would not do to let them go.

The still across the river was an illicit one, and that being the fact, the Canadian authorities ought to know about it.

And it would be more than likely that the two men would hasten to it and put Dan Ricketts on his guard.

"I guess we will take you to Juniper Falls with us," he said. "I'll promise you that you will be allowed to go free as soon as you have testified in regard to the kidnapping of the young lady here. I mean that you will be allowed to go free on American soil; I cannot say anything about what might happen on the other side."

So the two were marched back to where the horses were.

No one had disturbed them, and as Young Wild West unhitched his splendid sorrel he said:

"Boys, you will each take one of the prisoners on your mounts; I will take the young lady, if she has no objections. The distance is not far, anyway."

"You are going to take me to Juniper Falls, I suppose?" spoke up the girl.

"Yes, that is the best we can do to-night," replied Wild.

"Please don't let Colonel Denny know that I am here, then."

"You can rest assured that we will not, miss. We know that it was he who hired these two men to kidnap you and take you to the whisky still."

"Whisky still!" echoed Cheyenne Charlie. "Was that place a whisky still?"

"I guess it was," answered Jim, with a laugh.

"I thought so. I smelled whisky all right, and it seemed to be good stuff, too. I'll bet that's the place where the Englishman gets his whisky that he sells in ther town on this side of ther river."

"I guess you have hit that right, Charlie," laughed Wild. "We will find out something about that part of it before we get through with this case."

The three horses rode along with their double burdens, and as they did so the rescued girl told who she was.

"My name is Faulkner," she said, "and I live in Meredith, Minnesota. I have an uncle and aunt in Plunket, whom I visited last summer for two months. During that time I became acquainted with the daughter of Colonel

Denny who has since died. The colonel made himself very objectionable to me, and when I came North to visit my relatives this time I was in hopes I would not see him. But one of the men who kidnapped me let a few words slip that told me only too plainly who was responsible for the outrage. I have reason to believe that Colonel Denny is a double-dyed villain and a traitor to his country, and I hope and pray that he will not go unpunished."

"He will be taken care of all right, Miss Faulkner," answered our hero. "I will see to it that you are placed in comfortable quarters for the balance of the night, and will have a guard placed so that you need fear no one, from colonels down to the lowest rascals of the border."

"Thank you!"

That was the sum and substance of the conversation, and when they arrived at the headquarters in Juniper Falls a few minutes later the girl was in the best of spirits.

Wild and his party got there just in time to see a big gathering.

The Deadshot Band had returned, bringing fourteen prisoners and no end of confiscated stuff that the smugglers had tried to get across the border.

"Hooray for Young Wild West!" shouted Lively Rick, when he saw the Young Prince of the Saddle ride up with the fair girl on his horse with him.

Then everybody took off their hats and cheered.

Colonel Denny stood in front of the door of his quarters, his face very pale in the glare of the oil lamp that burned there.

Cheyenne Charlie flaunted the red handkerchief that contained the money he had left for his villainous hirelings.

At the sight of it the colonel immediately retired to his rooms.

"Gentlemen!" cried Young Wild West, "as my Band of Deadshots captured these prisoners, I will hold them till morning myself. It is not necessary to have them committed to the guardhouse by Colonel Denny."

A cheer went up at this, Deering joining in with heart and soul.

The prisoners, eleven of whom were Chinamen, were placed where they could not get away, and then Wild had a woman servant take care of Minnie Faulkner.

He had one of his band guard the door of the room she went in, in addition to this, and then he turned in himself.

The next morning he was up at six, determined to finish up the smugglers as soon as possible.

As he walked out of his quarters the first person he came in contact with was 'Arry Hatwood, the Cockney whisky peddler.

"Ello, Young Wild West!" the fellow called out. "Where is that blawsted, blooming Chinaman hof yours?"

"I don't know," replied Wild. "I guess he is asleep."

"Well, Hi want to say that 'e's a cute one. 'E fleeced me at poker last night."

"He did, eh? Well, that serves you right. Now, Mr. Atwood, I want to ask you a question, and if you don't answer it truthfully you are liable to get the top of your head blown off. I mean business and I never make a miss when I shoot!" and Wild drew his revolver and leveled it at the astonished Englishman.

"Wha—wha-a-at do you want to hask me, sir?"

"How do you get your whisky over here from Dan Ricketts' still?"

"Through a blawsted, bloody, blooming pipe, sir, that comes half the way from the still hunder the river to the shanty of the two 'unters called Bill Palmer hand Jake Spots!" was the reply and then the Cockney placed his hand over his heart and shut his eyes as though it was his last minute on earth.

Wild laughed in spite of himself.

He called a guard and promptly had the fellow placed under arrest.

A few minutes later a man came running from the quarters of Colonel Denny with the announcement that the colonel had shot himself and was dying.

There is little more to add to the story of Young Wild West and his Deadshot Band.

They had not been in Juniper Falls long before Wild had got a pretty good clue as to how the smuggling was being carried on.

Colonel Denny was the clue to the whole thing.

But the Chinese who had been working with his assistance had to be taught a lesson, and they were suppressed in short order.

The still was also raided by the British authorities and Minnie Faulkner returned to her uncle and aunt.

When everything had been settled Young Wild West and his Band of Deadshots started for Weston, Dakota, where they arrived in due time, ready for the next thing that turned up.

THE END.

Read "YOUNG WILD WEST'S BLIND RIDE; OR, THE TREASURE TROVE OF THE YELLOW-STONE," which will be the next number (59) of "Wild West Weekly."

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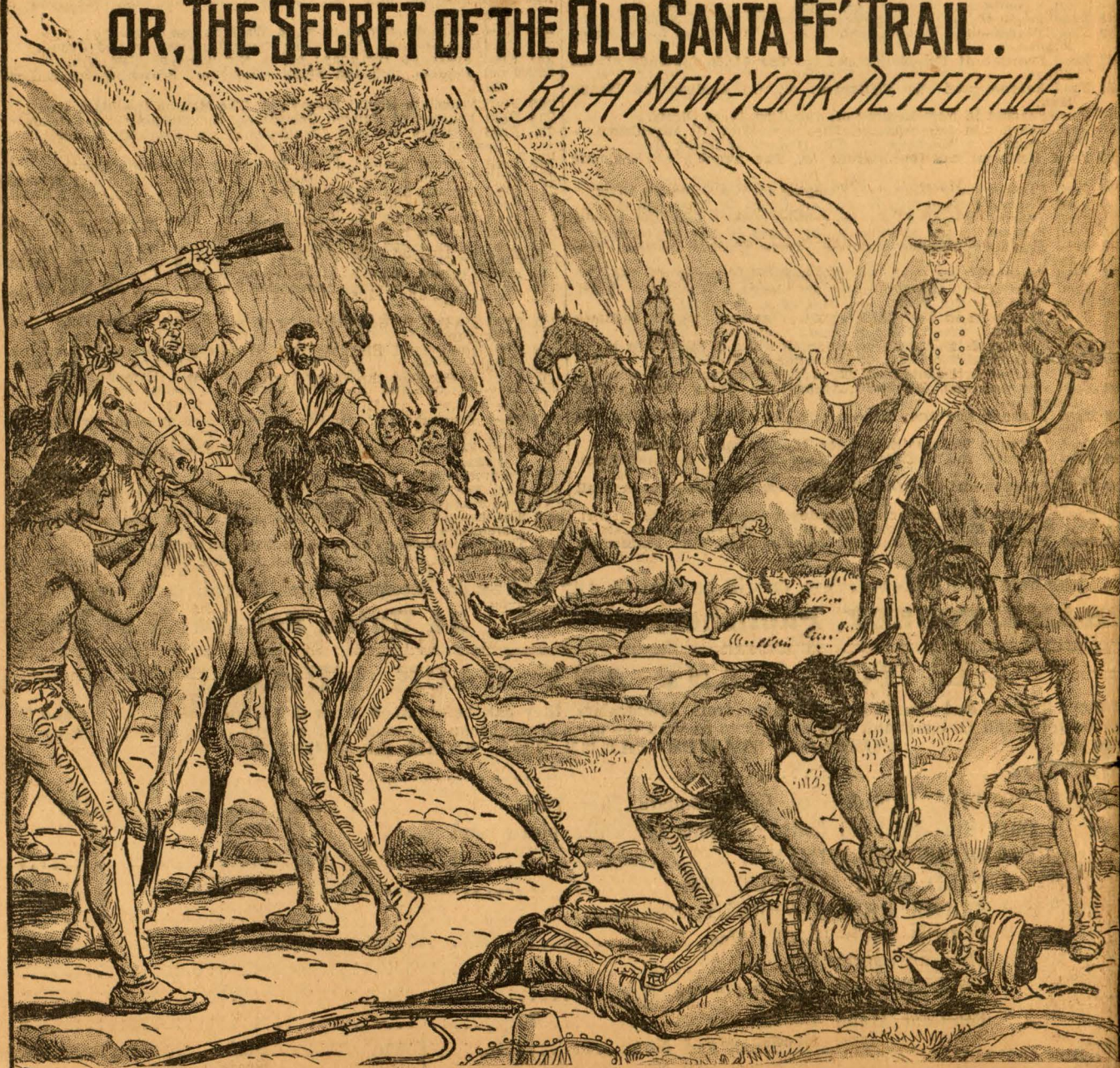
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